

# SMITH'S

MAGAZINE



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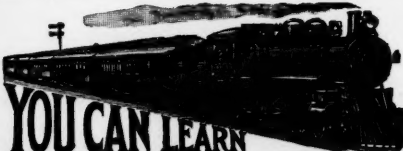
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Vol. XIX

No. 3

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A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 19

JUNE, 1914

NUMBER 3

## Come Play With Me

By Grace Mac Gowan Cooke

Author of "The Joy Bringer," "The Power and the Glory," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE FIRES OF SPRING.

IT was a drenched spring day, in Watauga, Tennessee. A smell of moist earth hung over the newly made geranium beds in the square and mingled with the sickish, acrid odor gutters send up when spring rains wash them. In the boyhood of the year, Arcady seeks to encroach upon the town—and makes a little headway. Trolleys clanged to and fro in the paved streets; the hum and clash of a busy minor metropolis roared up toward the windows of tall office buildings; but the city herself, a nymph gone wrong, dragged her soiled skirts about the whiteness of her limbs, and looked out at life with eyes in which the immortal youth still hungered.

Such days put an edge on people's nerves. For reasons as old as the firmament, as new as the falling rain, an immeasurable revolt wakens in humanity with the turn of the year. Man remembers his beginnings, when he was not harnessed to life, but was harnessing life to his needs. There are stirrings in him of the cave man, who, in sultry springtides like this, used to leap on the back of a woolly horse, clasp it with his knees, and, beating it naively

about the head with a shin bone to make it gallop, work off, by means of its speed and his own excited whoops, the unrest that the big throb of earth's renewal set moving in his blood. It is ever the surface of things that changes; at the core may be found the same old forces, the same old problems.

Stockbridge, wordlessly directing his chauffeur to the farther side of the seat, getting in to drive the car himself, and sending it over the wet pavement toward his office building at an injudicious speed, was the modern equivalent of a war-bonneted brave shooting the swollen rapids of some vernal freshet in his canoe, a wary glance ever on the horizons of war.

A broker of thirty, he was already the biggest financial figure in his native city. His imagination saw things in dollars and cents; it reached forward to the finances of greater cities, the money pulses of the world. He was as predatory as a hawk, as keen of eye, as ruthless. Mere rudiments of the softer emotions stirred in his breast under a deadening weight of the self-assertion that had secured for him place and power.

He left the car and stalked across the sidewalk, deep in a scheme that should overthrow the English stock-

holders of the Morningside Land Company and give him complete sway of its destinies.

As he passed the revolving doors, their scoop tossed into his face a curious, little, runaway wet wind that whispered of truancy. It brought with it a breath from a boyhood that was farther off than that of many an older individual, and he thought irrationally of a youthful fishing trip up the river to Queensborough. Laborious days and nights of scheming, the big game of piling thousands upon thousands till they should make millions, these became the dream. The reality was that queer, sleepy little hamlet where two rivers meet, an inconsequential dot upon the map of Tennessee; the thickets of rhododendron and laurel on the banks of the jade-green Emory, with pink blossoms peeping out of the mist, like the shy faces of country girls.

Going solemnly up in the elevator, with the air of its being his private lift, patronizing the others who chanced to ascend with him, permitting their presence on sufferance, he was still paddling a dugout canoe where the Emory meets the Tennessee.

As he stepped out at his own floor, he became aware that the dugout he was mentally paddling was not a dugout at all, but a barge. It wasn't a coal barge, such as might have been expected to interest him, bringing potential wealth down from his own mines, but a peaked, Egyptian sort of craft, spread with purple carpets and tended by numerous slaves. It bore Cleopatra, in the person of a small girl who had run away to join him, slipping out of a back gate and coming breathlessly to him on the river bank just as he was untying his canoe. He could see her little new-moon face much more plainly than he saw the formidable gold lettering on the door of his office suite; he could hear the murmur of her voice

above the noises of the street and the building.

She had called him Mark Antony, this slim, flat-breasted, five-foot Cleopatra, with her skirts to her shoe tops, and her eyes full of dreams. She had named him for the pattern lover of all time, for no better reason than that she had been reading Shakespeare the day she chanced upon him for playmate.

Her capture of him for this purpose had been one of the most astonishing things about the whole affair. As he had passed Judge Adene's, he had seen her standing in the open back gate—a gate that was always kept locked in its high board fence. He had been on his way to the river. She had looked at him, and he had almost stopped; he had found himself walking more and more slowly. As he was untying the canoe, she had come running down the bank.

"Oh, is that your boat?" she had asked. "I was going to play barge in Danny Ferguson's dugout. Danny said I could. Would you mind if I go with you?"

He had explained to her that it was Danny's boat he was untying—a thing she must have known. She had told him her name—Lyria Adene—as she had got in, all mixed up with details about Antony and Cleopatra; a Lyrian version of the affair, which, in its exactitude, would have been deemed none too creditable in Queensborough. Stockbridge himself, having been at that time a serious-minded youth, headed for a serious-minded young manhood, would have been scandalized had he been able to get the true gist of the matter from her excited account.

Something had made him willing to have the child go with him. Something had reconciled him, who had always forced any companion to ask for the bait in a whisper, to the incessant chatter of her fluting, little voice. By the time he had the canoe loosed and ballasted, she had got him used to being



called Mark Antony. By the time they were established in a good fishing ground, he had liked it. Before the trip was over, he had had a promise—not difficult to obtain—that she would come again next day. And as they had walked home to dinner—he to the hotel, and she to that gate that he was never to see farther open than was necessary to admit her small person—they had felt, in their differing ways, that they belonged to each other.

No morning thereafter, for two weeks and more, but had seen those two in the dugout on the Emory, under blue skies or gray, and even during the threat of an April shower. Then Stockbridge's outing had come to an abrupt end. His father had died very suddenly, leaving some thousands of barren acres and a tangle of debts to his son. The young fellow had come back to Watauga and plunged into a life so strenuous, so fitted to call out his own peculiar powers, that this fishing trip on the Emory might have belonged to a previous incarnation.

Twelve years later, when the land boom had struck the new South, his fortunes had shot up with a suddenness that would have made a weaker man dizzy. He had held to sanity while others had gone wild, and had grown richer and richer. The newspapers had graduated him from the "young-Napoleon-of-finance" class; to-day the greatest name they could give him was plain Stockbridge, without a mister. The suite in which he now transacted his business was large, the office assistants employed in it numerous. But in the golden announcements on its portal, the Morningside Land Company led all the rest, for into that domain had gone the land that had kept his father poor, and out of it was to come, in spite of numerous and promising side ventures, the bulk of his large and growing fortune.

The girl at the wicket—an individual

who figured on Stockbridge's pay roll as "Susan L. Traynor," and who was known to her intimates as "Susy Lucy," or in more rapid and unbraced moments as "Suze Luce," and even "Su Lu"—glanced up as he passed, and dropped her eyes again, without expecting any greeting. She went on addressing envelopes and chewing gum.

Halfway across the outer apartment, Stockbridge discovered that the door of his private room was ajar. He turned to his secretary with cold displeasure.

"It's—it's a Mrs. Faine," young Edmiston half whispered. "She's got some plan to explain to you about a town up the river—Queensborough, I think."

Stockbridge's mind had automatically dropped back into its usual slot as he had passed through the office door. The word Queensborough barely checked the forward movement of its powerful drive. He paused, with his hand holding down the packet of annotated mail he was laying on Edmiston's desk. Queensborough— But that failed to explain why a total stranger had been, in his absence, put into his private office.

Everybody in the room was looking at him, and he was aware of it. Without displaying the fact, he glanced again through the open door of his private office—and all the eyes followed him; one young woman bit nervously at a pencil as she watched. Edmiston alone seemed confident. His air reassured the others. Stockbridge, from where he now stood, got a fair view of the little figure at the sacred desk.

Her decent black gown was frayed, and patched, and shiny at the seams. Her shoes—never good—were burst; they had been mended with a needle and thread, and then inked over the patching. Their wearer sat with them hopelessly crossed, with the evident intention of concealing their dilapidation. She was in mourning. Her face was

turned away toward an open casement, through which the spring wind blew.

"What did you put her in there for?" Stockbridge demanded. "Who opened that window?"

"She asked me to raise it for her," Edmiston stated, with what his employer characterized as a silly grin on his face. "She said the air was—this morning— She asked me to open the window. You— Oh, you just talk to her a minute, Mr. Stockbridge," the secretary pleaded, in an undertone. "You won't be sorry."

He wouldn't be sorry! Angels were preparing a record of the abysmal sorrows, the raptures that would sting like pain, that waited upon the meeting of plain, heavy, practical John Stockbridge and the shabby, small intruder in his office. Nobody warned him; he strode through the door and accosted his visitor rather brusquely.

"Mrs. Faine, I believe? You wanted to see me?"

She looked up. She was not in her first youth, nor was there any miraculous beauty about her; so much he saw at the initial glance, and it reassured him. The face was thin, set around with a mist of fine, dark hair that did not actually curl, but had a cloudy trick of blowing in soft, curving, loose ends. Her features, as he put it to himself, were nothing remarkable; but her expression held him; a warmth, a very passion of good will that shone in her eyes, that ran forward to greet you, that beamed upon you with the thriftless, lavish sweetness of spring sunshine, made other matters in her appearance less important. After a second glance, Stockbridge went toward her as one who recovers a treasure.

"It is—isn't it? I thought they said Mrs. Faine," he exclaimed, putting out the hand he had not expected to extend, clasping fingers whose worn gloves, like the shoes, showed patches.

One would have said that, to a per-

sonage of his conventional mold, her appeal would be slight, yet his face had softened strangely. Queer lines of tenderness, reflected from her smile, relaxed the habitual, preoccupied frown. For she was just one of those creatures who look at every human being in God's world with the eyes of His true love. So long as love remains the most precious thing in the world—and the most confusing where values and estimates are concerned—a woman like this will be called beautiful.

She laughed. An irrational happiness radiated from her just as it had from the little Cleopatra in the boat.

"You knew me, after all," she cried, as if the mere statement were cause for joy.

"Queensborough?" He groped like a man guessing a riddle. "Of course I knew you. I've never—" He was on the verge of telling her he had never forgotten! Such words as "always," "forever," "eternal" insinuated themselves as fitting things to say. And he had scarcely remembered the quaint, little girl in the quaint, old town from the morning of good-by until this morning. He stood staring at her. If the idea had not been grotesque, one would have said that he could not look away. His gaze was full of that unreasonable pity that we feel when we find that the child companion of our forgotten childhood has been growing older, too. He was plainly aware of the woeful shabbiness.

"I thought they said Mrs. Faine," he repeated.

Her face clouded at his repetition of the name; her hands shook as she rearranged the crape veil that hung from her bonnet. For the first time she looked a bit nervous.

But Stockbridge sat down reassuringly near, facing his visitor. Seen so close—almost as close as the purple-awninged barge had placed them—the little woman in threadbare mourning



melted, transmuted, in that wet wind of spring, into Cleopatra. He himself was once more Mark Antony—the man who could throw his world away for a woman's sake.

After a while he forgot the shoes, and could not see the rusty bonnet. She was becoming to him, as she did to most people, just Lyria, a thing apart, a wondrous small figure, springing on ahead in the paths that must lead to happiness. "Come play with me," those clear eyes bade him; and from behind them looked out the immortal child heart that lives always in its dream, that is ever trying to allure with a wild, keen piping. Could the soul of John Stockbridge rise and follow?

"Yes," she confirmed his statement, "Mrs. Faine. I am a widow."

It was almost as absurd as when she had said she was Cleopatra.

"Lyria!" He repeated the old-fashioned name softly. The wet wind blew in his face now, too, and he didn't even ask to have the window pulled down. "Well—well—well! To think of having you here in my office! What brought you? Tell me all about it."

He regarded his visitor with an eagerness that promised his undoing, and fairly begged her to work her spell upon him. A man without a boyhood—almost without a childhood—must be avid for play.

"Why, you see," she began seriously—Lyria being serious was rather like a small girl playing funeral—"when grandfather died, five years ago, there was nobody to look after me.



*She went on addressing envelopes and chewing gum.*

Mammy Aniky, that raised me, had been dead two years, and there was a young negro in the kitchen, and no kin-folks of any sort. Judge Faine was grandfather's law partner. He was a widower, and all his children were grown up and married, and so he—I—married him."

She could not meet Stockbridge's eye, but looked down, suddenly dashed and silent. He recollected Faine, the senior member of a senile firm, a fussy, antiquated country lawyer. He must have married the poor child by way of disposing of his partner's unfinished business. There was really nothing presentable to say about such a union. Stockbridge mentioned the one feature that seemed of importance to him:

"But, he's dead now. You said you were a widow?"

The speech might not have been considered tactful—it was, indeed, scarcely decent—but apparently Lyria found it exactly the right thing. She flashed into sudden smiles, showing little white teeth like rice grains. It seemed the most delightful thing in life to be a widow in rusty crape and broken shoes, trying to make her way among strangers in a strange city.

"Yes—a widow." She repeated the title with evident enjoyment of its novel dignity. "Though nobody in Queensborough called me anything but Lyrie Adene, up to the very last day. They were still telling me what I must do and what I mustn't. They all thought it was very foolish of me to sell the old place and come down here. Now that I've done it, I feel exactly like the younger son in the fairy tale, setting out to see the world. I've got an idea about—investments—that I want to talk over with you."

Stockbridge smiled indulgently. The waters of life had been going busily under the bridge of his days since he had played at Antony and Cleopatra with Lyria Adene. He was rounding out his existence in a prosaic fashion—getting rich, getting married. The wife he had chosen was an ornate young woman of ornate family and education; the ornate nuptials that would unite her destiny with his were now very near at hand. She had a social standing in Watauga, and social ambitions of an order to match his financial intentions. To connect this shabby little widow with such matters seemed absurd. He did not connect her. He smiled when she said investments, and asked:

"Going to come play with me again, Cleopatra? This time I'll catch more than bass for you. I'll make your fortune."

He watched her eyes as he made his half-jesting speech, and they would

have made even a less imaginative man think of purple twilight skies with the stars coming out in them. Surely any folly that lit such fires was wisdom.

"Oh, you're good—good!" she half whispered. "But I always knew you were. When I came to Watauga and found everybody getting rich out of real estate, the first thing I heard about was your wonderful, noble work in this town. I was so proud of you! I board at Susy Lucy's grandmother's boarding house, and they talk more about you there than anything else. So when I thought up this idea of booming Queensborough, as you've boomed Watauga, I got Susy Lu to bring me to see you."

At first Stockbridge did not recognize his office girl under the more informal name.

"You didn't need anybody to bring you to me, Lyria," he reproached her. "You were coming, anyhow, weren't you?"

"I suppose so," said Lyria. "I talked to the young gentleman out there"—she waved a vague hand in the direction of the larger office and Edmiston—"and he said my scheme was great."

Stockbridge smiled a little at the child's notion that his secretary's word amounted to anything.

"Of course your scheme's great," he agreed brusquely. "Tell it to me."

"Well, you remember the awfully big lots they have around their houses in Queensborough, and most of them own some farming land at the edge of town, too. Don't you see that if you and I could start a real-estate boom for them, it would make nearly everybody in town rich? As it is, they're hardly getting anything out of their property. I know I never did out of mine, and I sold dreadfully cheap."

"How cheap?" inquired Stockbridge.

Normally, he had as little interest in Queensborough real-estate values as he had in the price of corner lots in para-

dise—or purgatory. But with Lyria looking into his eyes, he felt that the gate in that high board fence where the Adene property ran back to orchard and pasture—the Cleopatra gate—was worth money.

"I only got twenty-five hundred dollars," she said; "and you know it was a great big house, if the roof did leak and it was needing repairs pretty much all over. Twenty-five hundred dollars!" She evidently thought the sum impressive, though she had mentioned it as a low price for her home. "Of course I've spent some, and I'll have to keep out a little more to live on while we're getting the thing started; but don't you think I've got enough to begin on? I live very cheaply. I'd devote all I have to booming Queensborough. What do you think of it?"

It would have taken a hardy man to put such a query as that to Stockbridge, with figures and percentages worked out. Lyria babbled of it, and surely it was to him as if she uttered in rhyme, or held forth in song. He did not attempt to classify his emotions; he never analyzed himself. The wet wind still blew through the casement opened for her.

"It's an excellent idea," declared the hard-headed man of business. "I see you're a genius at this sort of thing. Am I to have an interest in your scheme? Will you take me in on the ground floor as a partner, or are you so greedy that you want to run it alone and get all there is in it for yourself?"

It was said a good deal as he used to say the Mark Antony speeches she had supplied to him, but now he was talking his own lingo, and, in a measure, playing his own game. He smiled, yet he seemed to be in earnest. Kindled by her delight, he made the play more and more his own. He fetched out for her diversion prospectuses of enterprises in which he was interested; he explained the methods of their work-

ings—always with the air of assuming that she knew more about it than he. All the printed matter of the Morning-side Land Company, Limited, was spread abroad upon his desk. She saw how they dealt not only in suburban lots, making subdivisions of their own, but mined coal, and iron, and copper.

He was not admonished by his irrational promptings of tenderness toward the poor little thing. That his pulses should jerk a bit because he touched her hand in getting her an eraser, that he should actually blush when his arm crossed her shoulder as he reached up to detach a map from the wall—neither of these phenomena warned him of what was to come. It was he alone who was moved, shaken; Lyria sat chattering on as unconsciously as Cleopatra in her barge, as a small girl playing go-to-see.

Most of us live pretty dryly in the desert of fact. But some know of a fabled oasis where they have squared the circle—which is no more than to say that they have reconciled the tremendous, angular justice of life with that equally tremendous circle of love eternal. Stockbridge, a large body entirely surrounded by practical sand, had no inkling that in Lyria he was dealing with a stray from this squared-circle country. A philosopher might have bade him beware, but he kept none in his employ—there were only a secretary and six typists; so he went forward, unsuspecting.

Lyria was happier than mere words could tell. They had no need to tell it; her eyes spoke, the movements of her head, her little, fluttering gestures, as she pulled off her gloves, showing delicate, immature hands, strained and roughened by hard work. He provided pencil and paper, and she set down a list of people whose holdings were large in Queensborough.

With every movement that brought him close to her, every time he said

yes in response to her queries, or bound himself with vows, he felt the thrill of adventure—the Great Adventure that is of the heart and soul, and has nothing to do with money. And the thrill of it brought no thought of his ornate fiancée. He had no sense of disloyalty to any promise. Lyria allured the man as inevitably as she had the boy, and as innocently. She danced on ahead of him now, as she had then, and sent over her shoulder an irresistible call.

And the tune of her piping was: "I knew you would! I knew you would! How kind you are! How good you are! Oh, I'm so happy—so happy!"

She brought him a dizzy, spacious sense of power, such as his everyday, dollar-and-cents successes never could give.

"We'll be partners in this Queensborough business," he asserted. "Just you and I. I'll make you rich, Lyria. You'd like that?"

"I knew," sighed Lyria blissfully, "that if I could get to you and talk about it, you'd see it as I do. Oh, won't it be lovely? All those dear folks that have never had anything in their lives and have been such pitiful shut-ins suddenly made rich!"

It wasn't exactly what Stockbridge had meant. "We'll make something out of it ourselves, while the thing's going," he amended, from force of habit. But actually at that moment she had made him feel that the welfare of the Queensborough populace was important, too.

"Of course," agreed Lyria negligently. "You've got rich here in Watuaga, and I'm sure you've done a lot of good while you were getting rich. I mean to take part of the money I make out of this Queensborough deal"—she had caught up his word and used it proudly—"to buy them a town clock. They need one."

A man came into the outer office. Edmiston tapped discreetly and presented a card.

"Tell him to wait," said Stockbridge, settling himself more comfortably in his chair.

"I mustn't keep you," Lyria protested. "I can come again to talk it over with you."

"Yes, we'll have a good many sessions before we get the thing settled," Stockbridge agreed. "You're my partner now—just as you were in the fishing business, Cleopatra."

She laughed in sheer delight. She could have hugged him. Here was a big playmate worthy the name, taking her right into all the wonderful realities of business and making her part of them.

There was another stir of entry in the outer office, and again Edmiston came deprecatingly, this time without cards, but with the announcement:

"Mr. Barringer, Mr. Moore, and Adams, of the *Herald*. They said you were going out with them at ten o'clock."

Stockbridge glanced at the card on his desk, which bore the name of the Reverend Hilary Brand.

"I wonder if you wouldn't like to talk to this man while I get rid of the other folks," he said intimately, showing the bit of pasteboard toward his companion.

"Oh, yes," agreed Lyria readily. "I'm interested in his work down at the riverside mission. I board close to it."

"Don't you get too much interested in his mission," said Stockbridge jealously. "He came because he heard I was elected to the vice presidency of the Gloriana Mills yesterday. He's been hammering at me a long time on the sanitary condition of the buildings. You might talk to him about them, and report to me—as long as we're going to be partners."

They were emerging from the inner office now. Stockbridge found his visitor a chair, and brought his secretary up to say: "Edmiston, Mrs. Faine'll

be here a good deal in the future. Clear this table for her work."

The young fellow almost dared to assume an I-told-you-so expression. What had figured first as a silly grin had become permanent—anyhow, it was always there when he looked Lyria's way. He seemed to think he deserved special credit for her.

Stockbridge, after he had nodded to the others and greeted the curate, cut that reverend gentleman out of her horizon with a broad shoulder, and stood for a moment talking to her in carefully lowered tones. Again everybody in the office watched them. The typewriters clicked—but Heaven knows what they wrote! Edmiston groped, unseeing, among the litter on the table he was clearing.

The magnates—to give them the name always bestowed on them by the local papers, a title, indeed, that they wore almost as visibly as a red label or a blue ribbon—stood near Susy Lucy's wicket. Stockbridge spoke his last word, and joined them. They went into the private office, and Edmiston was called for directly.

"The fattest one, with rolls on the back of his neck, is the blast furnace," whispered Susy Lucy, "and the saggy one, with wrinkles up and down, is the rolling mills."

The Reverend Hilary Brand was an unusual person, with a tender, twisted smile and patient eyes. There was a history behind his presence in the riverside mission and his cotton-mill work. He and Lyria spoke a common language; their values were the same. In five minutes the Queensborough scheme took second place.

"I wish," said Brand, when he heard that she was going into a venture with Stockbridge, "that it was something connected with his interests at Cottonville. It would put life into the work there to have a woman like you enlisted in it."

"I am enlisted," sighed Lyria, desisting Queensborough, leaving it without a thought, shut in, poverty-stricken, unboomed. "There are so many lovely things a body could do if they had money. It's only Mr. Stockbridge that can combine noble actions and money-making. Perhaps if I make a good deal out of this Queensborough scheme with him, I could take up the Cottonville work. I'd love to."

"But you could be of all the use in the world to me now—without money," protested Brand; "or without much money, anyhow. See here—I want to show you what I'm trying to get all the mill owners out there to combine on." And he brought a packet of cards and papers from his pocket, and handed them to her one by one, with explanations.

She gathered up the bunch and pushed her chair closer to Susy Lucy's table, to spread them out and study them in order.

"I see," she murmured. "It's a big home for the girls out there. Why couldn't you start this without money? Run it as much like a hotel as possible. If you get the right woman at the head of it, the girls themselves will pretty near keep it up."

Brand nodded, his eyes fixed on her. He thought she was the woman; but Lyria took Susy Lucy's envelopes away, against her guttural protest, and called the office girl's attention to what they were discussing.

"See," she urged, "wouldn't it be just the very place for your grandmother? I wonder if we could make it worth her while to go out there."

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"Mr. Stockbridge won't mind," Lyria assured her. "Mr. Brand wants me to run over these once more. It's raining again."

It was, indeed, the water sluicing on the big windowpanes until the room was gray. Everybody studied Lyria stealthily, and when she caught the watching eyes, she sent toward the watcher such a warm glance of good will that the temperature was raised; it was as if a breath from a bank of wild flowers had blown through the place.

Inside of five minutes nobody in the room was working; the place was like a schoolroom with the teacher gone; low-toned laughter, question and reply, hummed through it. Two girls left their machines and came, fascinated, to listen to the voice of Lyria's charming.

Then the door of the inner sanctum opened, and the quartet it contained came ponderously forth. The girls hanging about Lyria's chair scuttled back to their desks. Susy Lucy began to address envelopes furiously. Every head went down over a task. Only Brand and Lyria—other-worldly souls—sat unconscious, with their backs to the room, and continued their conversation concerning eleemosynary matters.

Stockbridge was himself again, easy, masterful, the rich man among rich men, as efficiently specialized, as grim, as a machine gun. His glance took in Lyria with the same unseeing lack of interest that he gave to the desks and chairs. Then something about her—the sound of her voice, perhaps—got a flicker of his attention. He appeared to drag his mind back from far places to remember her, and find a reason for her sitting beside his office girl. Then she turned eagerly to Brand, and Stockbridge stopped short in his tracks, letting the others go on. Her little air of having done playing with him had sent a pang through all his being. He looked at the rain-washed windows, and then at her shoes. Stepping closer, he touched her arm to attract her attention.

"You can't go out in this," he said, with authority.

"Oh, never mind." Lyria spoke over her shoulder, a note of mild impatience in her voice. "Don't worry about me. Go right along."

Susy Lucy looked with incredulous eyes, hearkened with incredulous ears, to a person who bade the boss go right along.

Stockbridge studied the streaming crape veil with a drawing down of the brows above his cold eyes. Lyria never turned her head, but bent closer to Brand and almost whispered. The broker did not need to be told that he was superseded.

"See here," he repeated, "you can't go out in this. You'll get all wet. Let me take you home in my car."

"It doesn't matter. I've got nothing on that the rain could hurt," Lyria replied quite as positively. Then, as if she realized that she had been a little briefer than was necessary: "I'd certainly like to ride in an automobile once in my life—I never did. But Mr. Brand and I are so interested in this now that I can't tear myself away. You run along."

There was a lamentable lack of dignity in her remarks concerning the automobile; the wind in the treetops had as much dignity as Lyria Faine would ever acquire—she was as frank and as unfettered. But the shoulder turned to him, the absorption in Brand and his work at Cottonville, these did for Stockbridge.

"I told you not to get too much interested in Brand's charities," he said half jokingly. "You'll have to earn a lot of money before you go into that sort of thing. Better stick to me until you get your capital."

He smiled at her, a curious version of that drawing of the features that did duty when he found it necessary to be genial in the course of business. The group at the door was growing



dignifiedly restive. Lyria turned around fully, and showed a countenance of some impatience. She looked him over, and apparently didn't like him half so well as she had done fifteen minutes ago. Her severity of manner might have been imitated from a spinster aunt.

"I think charity comes first," she said seriously. "I've got a little money left. Maybe the Queensborough scheme wouldn't —"

"Yes, it would," countered Stockbridge promptly. "You won't give it up now—won't open it to any one else? You understand that I think it's great?"

He was holding her hand now, and fairly whispering. Of course, he was merely shaking hands, but Edmiston sat down suddenly at his desk and interrogated a pen rack with unbelieving eyes.

"Oh, you're in earnest?" Lyria said, with facile delight. "You really care—and you think I can be of use to you?"

"Well, just you wait until we get to work on our partnership," Stockbridge told her. "You'll not have to ask me any more about being in earnest. Remember—you're going out to Morningside with me to-morrow."

They passed on, trundling their millions with them as obviously as if they

had had them along in little wheelbarrows. Brand and Lyria returned to the scheme for building a working-woman's hotel in the cotton-mill suburb. The office caught its breath as one pair of lungs.

"Well, you sure cut some ice with the boss!" creaked Susy Lucy.

"Big, strong men are always the gentlest and kindest," Lyria voiced a popular fallacy. "Do you want to go with us to-morrow in the automobile? I'll take you."

Susy Lucy chewed on that as well as on her gum for some time in silence.

"Huh! Do I get half a day off for an auto ride?" she asked incredulously. "I bet I don't!"

Her awe of the chief amounted to reverence. He was the only human being her fearless soul found great and terrible. That she should ever ride in his car was a thing to be almost as much dreaded as desired.

The door opened, and Stockbridge put his head in, looking only at Lyria, regarding her with the fatuous expression stern people reserve for a petted child.

"Three o'clock to-morrow afternoon for your first automobile ride," he reminded her.

Lyria smiled and nodded somewhat patronizingly.



The door of the inner sanctum opened, and the quartet it contained came ponderously forth.

"May Susy Lucy have a half holiday, so that she can go along?"

"Yes."

"Could we take her grandmother, too?"

"Certainly. You're to have anybody you want."

The door closed. Lyria wafted what looked terribly like a kiss toward its panels.

"Isn't he good? Isn't he sweet, and good, and dear?" she appealed to the listening office. "*How you all must love him!*"

## CHAPTER II.

### THE GOD IN THE CAR.

The big car made a wide sweep, crossed lower Main Street, and came to a silent halt before the boarding house of Mrs. Martha Traynor, grandmother to the intrepid Susy Lucy. It was a two-story frame building, worse than unpainted, showing traces of a one-time coat of yellow ocher, blistered, falling off in leprous patches. It was sufficiently commodious to roof thirty or forty boarders by stringent crowding, and it was the place in which Lyria Faine chose to live.

Stockbridge sat in the automobile beside his chauffeur, and looked at the queer porch and crazy upper balcony of the building, where a jig-sawed pattern of thin pine board masqueraded as an adornment. Part of it had fallen half-heartedly away, dangling like a bit of soiled trimming from the petticoat of a sloven; the remainder stood awry with the inescapable suggestion of snagged teeth. The lot was narrow and scantily grassed. A small negro in one sexless garment, carrying a bucket of swill from the back door, almost upset it in an effort to see more of the newcomers. In the side yard crouched a twisted, beaten, dusty honey locust, wearing the sullen, shamed air of a city tree; and around the corner

of the house came a one-eyed cat, pioneering, with a kitten in her mouth.

The advent of the car, it has been remarked, was silent; its reception was not. A woman, sitting under the reluctant tree, keeping the flies from a whining baby, rose with a whoop and started into the house, volleying as she ran:

"Miz Faine, yer beau's come."

Stockbridge's face did not change at all; one would have fancied he had not heard the announcement, except for the fact that he sat still in the auto, expectant, looking at the house, and did not send in the trim mulatto who drove the car, to announce him.

Behind its dim, bleared window eyes the building hummed like a hive. All the forty boarders who were not away at their work were engaged in getting Lyria off. Miss Clara, a dressmaker, who seemed to have been born with that title, and never to have acquired a surname, drew portentous black brows as she peeped through a hole in the shade and then dashed back to Lyria's costume, which she had feverishly sketched out the night before.

"If y' must wear the bonnet," she said, "I'd take the veil off. You've got to lighten yo' mo'ning a little—under the circumstances."

Always at Miss Clara's skirts hung a spindling boy with an intolerable sniff—intolerable until one noted a withered leg and saw the apparatus he wore upon it. This was Brother Attie, whose parents had given him a shackling body and the name of Atlas, and then departed this life as if in dismay at their ineptness. Miss Clara was trying to straighten up their botch as she might have attempted to set right a misfit frock.

The dressmaker was thin and tall, with eyebrows that met above her nose—and a short chin; her face, beginning so impressively, being, after all, weak

and ineffectual. Miss Clara's temper was uncertain, but her devotion to her sickly charge covered, in Lyria's eyes, many defects.

The room was in a swirling confusion. All of Lyria's clothing had been pulled from its hooks in the closet and flung upon chairs after inspection. Most of the presentable belongings of the others had been brought in and offered, and left also on the chairs or on the floor. The lame boy, mercilessly inquisitive, snooped intermittently through these heaps of wear, and announced discoveries.

Susy Lucy, running in to get a glimpse of herself in the one looking-glass of size in the house, pulled a curl down on her forehead, and then punched it back furiously, recognizing its incongruity above her hard, round little face, with its high cheek bones, tilted green eyes, and tight skin.

Helping everybody, the least excited of them all, was an old woman, dressed in a lilac print starched to great stiffness. A black calico sunbonnet was already on her head, and a palm-leaf fan, deeply bound with black calico, in her hand. Mrs. Martha Traynor, whom everybody but Susy Lucy called Aunt Marth, was a mountain woman, so squarely built as to seem imposing without being either tall or broad. She looked as capable as a commodore, standing firm in her shoes, her bright blue eyes meeting yours with a glance at once friendly and searching. She was gray, and her work-worn hands had only the beauty of fitness for service. Her calico dress and checked gingham apron were perfectly neat.

It was not her fault that every rule of hygiene and peaceful living was daily violated within the four walls that inclosed her realm. She had a keen eye for that rude respectability of deportment which comes within the narrow definition of decency. She did her patient, kindly, keen-witted best, and, as

she would have told you, left the rest to the Lord.

"Oh, I wisht Bolly was here!" the woman of the baby reiterated. Bolivar Staley, her husband, was away in Texas, hunting work. "Bolly 'd size him up in no time," the wife continued. "Bolly knows a man, whether or which, soon's he puts eyes on him. They was a hoss trader oncet——"

"Miz Staley—will you, please, ma'am, step out of the way? I want her to get the looks of this hat of mine on her from the sides, an' you're right spang in front of the lookin'-glass," admonished Miss Clara.

If she had told Brother Attie to get out of the way it would have been reasonable; he was as inescapably underfoot as a carpet. Mrs. Staley retired in dudgeon, but returned almost immediately with what she called a "jab-it" for Lyria to wear.

Somewhere in the bowels of the house sounded a dismal mooring—old Captain Japson's French horn. The captain was a retired river-steamboat man, who occupied a little cubiculum cut off from the front hall and commanding the street. No doubt, sight of the automobile had set him to winding his horn.

"Thank the Lord that thing Mr. Stockbridge's brung ain't got hosses hitched to it!" said Aunt Marth, as the trio finally descended the stairs. "Ef it had, Jap's noises would shore scare 'em into runnin' away."

They issued from the front door; Lyria—the amorphous bonnet replaced by Miss Clara's best hat, "caught up at 'the side," as that lady phrased it, with a knot of white roses that the Staley woman had contributed—looking as if she had suddenly bloomed; Aunt Marth, serene as ever, meeting good fortune as placidly as ill; Susy Lucy, scared to death, wearing a cheap, ready-made duck suit, an enormous pompadour, and a hangdog half smile, slink-

ing behind, shifting her blinking eyes from the glory of the boss in his car.

"Has he got a nigger in with him?" demanded the old woman, in a suppressed voice.

"Hush, granny! That's the shuffer," explained Susy Lucy huskily.

Stockbridge was on the sidewalk, holding the door of the tonneau open, hat in hand, his face warmed to a geniality few people ever saw.

"We're the happiest crowd you ever took out in this automobile," Lyria informed him blithely, as the three women were getting in. "Oh, I wanted everybody in the house to go! Mrs. Staley—the lady you saw in the yard—it would have done her baby so much good. And Captain Japson—you heard him playing his horn. There he is now. He hardly ever gets out because he can't walk much. Never mind. If the Queensborough Land Company's a success, I'll buy a big one with eight or ten seats and take them all."

She leaned forward to wave at the woman who was returning to the yard, at an old man, standing in the open doorway of the house, with an unbelievably big brass horn, one portion of which lay about his neck as the boa constrictor lies around the fearless neck of the lady in the side show. He returned her salutation with an oomph-oomp—oomping, which he evidently intended for a musical phrase.

"I never can make the man understand that them noises ain't no treat," Aunt Marth said, speaking for the first time after their greetings.

They left Market Street, and climbed the bluff toward the bridge. The Tennessee at Watauga is still a mountain stream, fairly clear, reflecting the sky with but little tarnish of its blue. They went slowly across the bridge, getting behind an electric car, and accommodating themselves to its pace. A barge of sand was being unloaded; negroes, pushing wheelbarrows up a trestled in-

cline, droned an improvised chantry in unison. The tones came up soft, blurred, dripping with crude sweetness:

"Oveh th' riveh—oveh, th' riveh—over th' riveh, my dawlin'!"

You could have scraped quarts of New Orleans molasses from the sounds.

"Listen!" cried Lyria. "How sweet it is—how beautiful! It's as if they were singing to us."

She looked about her with eyes that matched the skyey wideness of river and welkin; her lips were tremulous with smiles, her little hands were never still. She was a child on a wonderful outing, pointing to the house boats moored in the willows, explaining to Aunt Marth things the old woman knew better than she did, delighting in Stockbridge as she delighted in his car, metaphorically sitting on the knee of both, and offering a child's reward of caresses and sweet words for their kindness.

"Oh, how happy we are—how happy we are!" she said over and over.

And they were happy. The flux of her personality had momentarily welded these incongruous atoms. Stockbridge leaned on his arm, and looked back at his guests, discussing land values, the lots they were going to see, the possibilities of applying his methods of exploitation to Queensborough; and uttering much with his eyes, with the whole pose of his big, heavy, immobile body. Aunt Marth glanced at him shrewdly, and then looked down. Susy Lucy gasped vainly, and forgot to close her mouth. Even yellow Bob, the chauffeur, a public-school product, who had scorned the boarding house with a menial's scorn, and regarded the chanters below with contempt, unbent and let his good will climb over his high collar, as it were, and out into the open. Aunt Marth, who had spoken of him as a nigger,

Susy Lucy, whose hand was against every man—they fell suddenly and inexplicably into the position of a happy family. And Stockbridge at the head of it, as inelastic as a wooden Indian, as a cast-iron lawn dog, felt his heart warm to all the world.

Every soul in the auto sunned itself in the glow of those innocent eyes; every one's glances followed the movement of those fluttering hands. They were all setting forth with Lyria on an expedition of high emprise. Susy Lucy's jaws moved slowly and more slowly. She finally removed the gum altogether, and disposed of it in some obscure hiding place, known to herself alone, thereafter holding up her head and looking about her quite cheerfully.

Passing through the streets of Mountain City, the south-side suburb, Lyria spoke reprehendingly of the size of the lots.

"People can't have nice homes with such little yards," she said authoritatively. "There ought to be room for grass and trees and flowers, and then some place to have a good vegetable garden. It isn't a home without such things as that."

"These lots are twenty-five by a hundred and twenty-five in the business section, and fifty by a hundred and fifty in the residence—the same that we have them laid out in Morningside," Stockbridge returned automatically. He could have given details like that in his sleep.

"It's too small," said Lyria.

"Suppose a body wants to keep a cow," offered Aunt Marth.

"We haven't arranged for the dairy business," smiled Stockbridge, as the car entered the Morningside tract.

This ground lay, hundreds of acres, softly rolling on the upper slopes of the first ridges beyond the river. Its crest commanded a noble view of the winding stream, of Sentinel Peak, the far-away blue hills, and the rimming highlands.

The wind sang high in the sky's blue hollow; the country was tricked out like a milkmaid at a fair, white blossoms of the wild plum, the purple-pink of the Judas tree, and weeds abloom, fringing all the waste lands. A green veil seemed to have been thrown lightly over the forest; the trees were beginning to cast a lacework of shadow on the budding ground; the gold-green of young leaves, even under clouded skies, retained a pale sunlight. Shallow pools by the wayside reflected all this spring finery. The newborn innocence of beauty everywhere was somehow disarming.

They stopped at the company's office. A gang of men was at work near it, roadmakers, mostly negroes, using big iron scrapers, mule-drawn like the mud-covered wagon that waited above them. Stockbridge brought up a square little man, and introduced him as their landscape architect, a Scotchman, shrewd of eye and chary of speech.

"Mr. McTweedy will talk to you about the size of the lots," he said, quite as if Lyria's opinion was important.

She ruffled like a dove under the flattery of it. "It's so good of you to let me help," she said trustfully. "Do you really think my ideas are worth while?"

"Really, I do," smiled Stockbridge.

McTweedy's surrender to the fascinations of Lyria was almost comic in its suddenness and completeness. He stood a few moments at the side of the car, looking up at her, listening. He nodded when she spoke of the beauty of winding roads, the necessity of sufficient lawns around people's homes, the charm of the Morningside tract if laid out in generous portions. Then the hard-headed little Scotchman got on his motor cycle and followed, traveling in the wake of the auto, getting close to its wheels in his efforts to hear what Lyria said, and to have a view



*A woman, sitting under the tree, rose and started into the house, volleying as she ran:  
"Miz Faine, yer beau's come."*

of her features. He agreed with her until Stockbridge smiled grimly and suggested the cost of such private grounds as she was proposing.

"Oh, but poor people need big yards to their houses more than rich folks do," Lyria contended. "Rich people have so much inside the building, but the poor have only what God gives them in the sky and the earth. Besides, they need room for a garden to help out with the table, and maybe a little orchard, or a vineyard—wouldn't that be nice?"

"And a place to keep a cow," Aunt Marth repeated her suggestion. "You can might' nigh make a livin' off'n a good cow."

"I reckon the Morningside Land Company jest wants to give poor folks all o' that," spoke up Susy Lucy with sudden sarcasm. "I reckon hit's jest a-goin' to give it to 'em because they need it."

Truly, unless the chauffeur had germs of financial understanding, Susy

Lucy was the only kindred spirit Stockbridge had with him in the auto.

They were climbing the clay side of the ridge, going up by a new road, which cut across the brown, pine-covered slope with a slash of Indian red. Below, the vacant lots were afoam with early dog fennel; ragged children ran and shouted; stray shoats and an occasional heifer showed that at present, anyhow, the outliers of Mountain City followed Lyria's plan and Aunt Marth's suggestion. The roadmakers were left behind; the continuous rattle of their chains was but a clinking in the distance; a fragment of song came up on the soft air, spontaneous, belonging to the scene and time as completely as the sound of the wind in the pines.

"This'll make a lovely place to live," said Lyria, almost in a whisper. "I'm going to pick out my lot—may I?"

Stockbridge's eyes softened and glowed upon her.

"I wish you would," he said. "I'll



give you an option on it at the first figures. When we fix up the Queensborough deal, we can probably make an exchange so that it'll cost you nothing."

It was his only way at present of expressing emotion. She moved him—and he offered her a business advantage. But Lyria understood. God had not made, or man invented, any kind of love that she could not understand.

"I think I'd like one up on top of the ridge," she suggested.

McTweedy circled in beside them, his motor cycle coughing.

"You've got a quick eye, ma'am," he put in. "That place is the pick of the whole tract."

"Well, then we'll show it to her," said Stockbridge genially. "It seems she's a customer that nothing but the best will interest." And he instructed the chauffeur to leave the road and climb the hill.

They all got out when they reached the top, and walked about under the pines. There is no more beautiful spot in all that beautiful country than the one that the Morningside Land Company was cutting up into fifty-foot lots, and that, but for McTweedy, would have been ruthlessly cleared and made into square blocks with half of the streets too steep for use. The sky was very wide and high above the hilltop, because the outlook was so all-embracing. You could see back to the big plateau, and forward to the great valley, with its winding river and town. Between the sun-brightened feathers of thick-fringing willows, the stream showed a sparkle of fluid amethyst and jade.

"When we get a great many factories," Lyria said, "I'm afraid it'll spoil our river."

Stockbridge smiled, uncomprehending. Life, as he saw it, could get along without the crystal beauty of streams, but factories were an imperative need.

From where they stood, they over-looked the Mountain City tract, which had been long ago cleared and laid out in right-angled streets. The soil had broken into red gullies that ate like cancers. The Scotchman pointed this out.

"Now you see why we ought to curve 'em," he appealed to Stockbridge. "If you cut 'em straight, you'll soon have no streets at all running north and south."

"It's the same way with garden paths," added Lyria. "See—here's the lot I'm going to build on. I'm going to have my front walk go right from the corner—this way."

Stockbridge's gaze followed her, as she ran, laughing, from the corner stake.

"I ought to shut my eyes and do it," she called back to him, "but I'm afraid of running into a bush. Some rich man in New York had a cow driven along the way to lay out his front walk."

McTweedy, too, was observing her with nods of comprehension and encomium. She carried the trail up to the top of the slope, where a group of pines and a tangle of lower bushes marked the site she had decided upon.

"You've taken pretty nearly a block for your residence, my lady. How many lots do you suppose I'm building on myself over in Watauga? Just one—and that a hundred feet deep and twenty-five front. Did you know I was going to be married?"

Lyria turned about, and faced him smilingly. Aunt Marth and Susy Lucy had wandered a little way down the slope, looking for blue curled mint. McTweedy was industriously following the print of her footsteps up that front walk, making a mental note of the way in which she had planned it.

"I don't care how many lots it is—your kind of lots," she laughed at him. "I don't care what kind of a little squinch of ground you build on there

in Watauga. This is about enough for me—from that pine over to where the street will come, and from the blackberry bushes down to the foot of the slope."

"There are ten lots in it," said Stockbridge, "but, of course, if we rearrange our plans, they may be only one lot—for you."

The concluding words were spoken so low that McTweedy, approaching, did not hear them.

"Is there any hope that you may rearrange?" the Scotchman inquired at his employer's shoulder. "I could get you out a map of this part of the property with building sites of an acre, say—or perhaps half an acre, if you didn't care to go so far."

"I hardly think it'll be worth while, Mr. McTweedy," returned Stockbridge, in his more normal tone. "It's quite unlikely that the directors would consider such an arrangement."

It was not until McTweedy strolled on, dismissed, whistling, that Stockbridge realized how Lyria had ignored the announcement of his marriage. Had she not noticed it? Women were usually interested in such matters.

Lyria sat down under the pine. The broker lay on his side, and looked up at her. It was very like the miracle of going back to one's childhood—that thing we dream of and never do. She was still so completely the little Cleopatra of the barge that she almost made him seem a Mark Antony. She was gazing across toward the city, veiled in its own smoke, which the spring sunshine transmuted to mist.

"The town is beautiful from here," she said softly; "but, after all, it isn't the right kind of place for homes. Look at Mrs. Staley's baby. The little thing would be perfectly healthy if it were in the country—in a spot like this."

Stockbridge preferred looking at her.

"I'll have to jot down some of that

nice, poetic talk of yours," he bantered, "and get out new prospectuses to use it in. Nothing takes better with real-estate buyers. Say some more."

"A roof always means home to me," Lyria went on reflectively, "but those roofs over there can't mean—home and love."

So ran the speech of the squared-circle country, of which Lyria would always be a citizen. Those who knew Stockbridge best would have said that she might as well have spoken Choctaw to the man, yet here he was responding to it—liking it.

"I think women are all the better for being a little sentimental," he said patronizingly.

"Am I sentimental?" Lyria considered the matter, her head aslant, her long lashes drooping. "I never thought so. Seems to me I'm very practical."

"I wouldn't say exactly practical," smiled Stockbridge.

"You think I'm the other thing—you think I'm impractical," said Lyria; "but I'm not, really. It's just my bringing-up that's given me, maybe, a little different manner. As far back as I can remember, there were only grandfather and I. He seemed to have been born old. I thought he must be a hundred when I was four. Generally he appeared to forget who I was, or how I came to be there. Mammy Aniky took care of me, and ran the house and spoiled me, of course. I wouldn't go to school. I didn't care to play with other children. I learned to read and write from the packs and packs of old letters up in the attic—mostly love letters. You see in that way I got on intimate terms with all of my family that were dead; they took the place of living playmates."

She brooded on the remembrance, her fingers lightly clasped about her knee, her eyes coming to unembarrassed rest on Stockbridge's face. A lady who had, her life long, communed with the



dead, need be put to the blush before no living man.

"It was father's and mother's love letters that I cared most for," she went on. "I know them by heart. And there were lots of others; some so old that the spelling was queer, and they were full of long s's, and the ink had faded out in places—but the love was there. One man that I always liked called the girl he wrote to 'Star of my heart.' Her name was Stella. Wasn't that lovely?—'Star of my heart.'"

"Star of my heart," repeated Stockbridge, looking up at her. For the moment it seemed as if he were applying the phrase to Lyria herself; he was, in fact, thinking how incongruous it would be offered to the ornate one. Lyria's wooing little voice babbled on.

"With all that stored-up family love, I never seemed to miss real people. I used to put on the old dresses that were there in the big chest, and play all afternoon, and whole, long, rainy days, at being with those folks. It seemed more real than going downstairs to sit at table with grandfather. He always propped a big book up beside his plate, and couldn't see me when he looked at me. Sometimes I got tired and lonesome, and put the people of the letters all around the table, eating with us—made a regular party of it."

Stockbridge leaned on his elbow, and studied her. He tried to imagine the life she spoke of, with its twilight of human effort and response.

He was vaguely moved to make a sentimental contribution to the conversation himself, and thought to allude again to his approaching marriage. Somehow he failed to do so.

"That was no way to bring up a child," he said. "It overdeveloped your imagination."

"Yes, that was it," said Lyria. "The dead were more real to me than the living, and the only thing that counted

was the way you felt toward folks—do you understand what I mean?"

Stockbridge did not, but said he did.

"It wasn't fair to let you live that way," he told her. "Now you're out in this tough old world of reality, how are you going to get along?"

"Is it a tough old world?" asked Lyria. "I'm finding it lovely, so far. There are so many nice, good people, and there's so much to be done for them. I think I'm going to be awfully happy in Watauga."

"People like you deserve to be happy anywhere," said Stockbridge.

It was a commonplace phrase; Stockbridge's emotions, though unusual enough to him, found none but commonplace words in which to express themselves, yet Lyria glowed.

"You see life just as I do, don't you?" she said confidently. "A great big opportunity for doing good to folks. Your opportunities are bigger, because you're bigger." She laughed a little, and Stockbridge smiled, uncomprehendingly pleased. "Of course, your life will be broader, and stronger, and in that sense happier than mine ever could be; but we see it just alike, don't we?"

Stockbridge swallowed the compliment without winking. There hasn't been one devised yet that would startle the common sense of a thoroughly overbearing man. You may in one breath attribute to him the virtues of the inquisitors and those of the martyrs, and you will not disturb his complacency.

"What do you mean by doing things for folks?" he asked suddenly. "You ought to be taken care of yourself."

"I mean things like this." She included the tract and the view in one comprehensive gesture. Stockbridge looked bewildered. "Providing beautiful homes for people as you're doing," she elucidated; "giving them what they never could get without you. Oh, I

think it's fine to be a big, strong man with the power of really helping humanity!"

Stockbridge got the thrill we do from the sweet, ignorant flattery of a child. It warmed him into the half-belief that he was all she said. Under its stimulus he spoke:

"I'd like to do something for you—something that would count. We'll put the Queensborough deal through, sure, and get enough out of it to give you a chance to live as you ought to here in Watauga."

Lyria's sweet eyes answered him before her lips spoke.

"If you can help me to make lots of money," she said, "I'll be perfectly happy; but I wouldn't want to leave Aunt Marth's. They're all awfully good to me there—Aunt Marth herself, and Captain Japson, and Miss Clara, and even Mrs. Staley, if you understand just how to take her. You didn't see Miss Clara. Sometimes she gets work in a dressmaking establishment uptown—quite a fashionable place. Her little brother was going to be lame unless somebody could afford to help her get treatment for him, and a brace for him to wear. They're like home people to me now; I know all their joys and sorrows. They'd feel bad if I got rich enough to change my boarding place. That's the first thing they said to me when I told them I was going into the real-estate business with you."

"When people talk that way to me," bantered Stockbridge, "I think they want to borrow money of me."

"No, they mean it—they really love me," Lyria maintained.

"Then you have loaned them money," smiled Stockbridge.

Lyria flushed.

"Oh, just a little—enough for Miss Clara to begin making the first payments to the doctor on Attie's brace and treatment, and to Mrs. Staley, so

that her husband can come back from Texas. He hasn't found a job out there, and the climate doesn't agree with him. But that isn't what I mean—that's giving them things they need. I'm always wishing I could give such folks foolish things that they don't need at all—only want."

Stockbridge laughed lazily.

"I'm afraid you're a subversive element," he said.

"It does people good to get the things they want," Lyria maintained stoutly. "When I was a little girl and used to go to church by myself, I never tried to listen to the sermon because I couldn't understand it. I'd just cuddle down there in the pew and look around and pick out the people that I knew were wanting something, and make believe how it would be if I came back to Queensborough very rich and gave it to them. They looked so solemn sitting there in church, and they'd look so gay after my gift wagon had gone past. The minister's wife always longed for a pink silk dress. She told me about it when I was ten years old, and I don't believe she ever told anybody else. She's dead. She never had her pink dress. Nobody can give it to her now."

The tragedy of the minister's wife and the pink silk frock would never have appealed to Stockbridge except as translated through Lyria. Read thus, it spoke to him of the great woman heart that offers sanctuary for all the sorrowful. The mightiest sometimes need that refuge.

"You can give things to the others that are left to get them," he urged, and his tone was a promise.

"Yes," Lyria hurried on, with a catch of eagerness in her voice. "There's Miss Mildred Faidley and her sister, Orpha. They're twins. Isn't it awfully queer when twins get old? Somehow you always think of twins as babies. Miss Mildred tells yet about how they

had to put a blue ribbon on her and a pink ribbon on Miss Orpha to tell them apart. It makes me cry to think about it, for they've grown up from being little babies with pink ribbons and blue ribbons on them, and people carrying them around on pillows—oh, wouldn't Miss Mildred and Miss Orpha look funny on pillows!—and now they've got none of the things that they thought they would have."

"Never mind," said Stockbridge, "just watch us! We'll give those dear old ladies whatever you feel that Providence has been holding out on them."

He was making good on the promise.

"I'm afraid we can't—quite," she said, laughing with wet lashes. "I think the hardest for them is that neither of them has ever had a lover. I don't know why I pity them so dreadfully for that—because I never had one myself, but they're not interested in other things like I am, and it seems to matter dreadfully to them."

"Cleopatra," broke in Stockbridge, "you're a fraud! You know you've got—"

There is no telling what follies he might have committed, had not McTweedy arrived at the moment with thankless columns of dry figures, setting forth the advantages of subdividing the Morningside tract into what he called "villa sites."

"I tell you it would pay in the long run," the Scotchman repeated. "I've laid out suburbs in Winnipeg and Buffalo, and I've done some work here in the South, and subdividing into little lots that bring poor houses is bad policy."

"It's very unkind," said Lyria sweetly, "for rich men to buy such a beautiful place as this, and then cut it up so small that none of it is worth having."

So she and McTweedy arrived at the same goal by different paths. Stock-

bridge heard both and listened to neither. He knew what he intended to do financially, though his expectations concerning Lyria would still have puzzled a sage.

They seemed neither to puzzle nor trouble Stockbridge himself. He looked about on his oddly assorted group on the spring hillside, and sent the chauffeur foraging to a little country store on the road to get what refreshments he could for them. The bill of fare turned out to be crackers, cheese, and striped candy. They ate sitting on the pine needles, picnic fashion. After it, Susy Lucy started up rooster-fighting trials with the linked heads of her wild pansies.

Under pretense of getting more flowers for this barbarous use, her grandmother lured the girl away as soon as lunch was over.

"My land," breathed Susy Lucy, looking back across a sharp shoulder, "the boss is almost like a human being! Wouldn't that jar you? Watch him talkin' over there with Miz Faine. Don't they look 1—1—"

"You hush!" cautioned her grandmother in a savage undertone. "I could 'a' slapped Miz Staley's jaws when she hollered out that-a-way about his bein' her beau. Nothin' scares a man off like such talk— But look at 'em."

McTweedy started once more to join the pair; Aunt Marth intercepted him, and pretended to need information about lots, thus proving that match-making is inherent in all females and survives all vicissitudes.

"But granny—he cain't—he's—" Susy Lucy protested in a husky whisper, overtaking her grandmother and plucking at her sleeve, as McTweedy got his wheel and started for the office to make a packet of printed matter for the old woman.

"How come?" demanded Aunt Marth.

"Why, they say he's engaged to Miss

Louise Barringer—the daughter of the blast furnace,” protested Susy Lucy, providing a fiery ancestry for the young lady without noticing. “They’re a-goin’ to be married next fall, ever’body says. The house is high about finished—up on the bluffs—and ever’body knows it. I reckon Miss Louise’s got most of her clothes. He cain’t get away from her now.”

Aunt Marth had looked a little staggered at first, but now she smiled grimly and sent another glance toward her host.

Lyria was telling Stockbridge exactly how the rooms were to lie in her house, and what the outlook from each would be, sitting cozily beside him on what she called “the front steps.” They were so exactly like a young couple planning their first home that the old woman appeared to be reassured.

“Well, mebbe he can’t—but I wouldn’t keer to say what Mr. Stockbridge could an’ couldn’t do. Looks to me like he’s mighty apt to follow his ruthers—wherever they lay.”

The day waned. The chauffeur had laid himself down beside his machine and slept. Cries and calls came up from below with the clearness that means evening. The teams of the road-makers turned with a great jangling of chains, and went valleyward. Lyria and Stockbridge got up reluctantly.

“Must we go? Is it really as late as that?” the little woman murmured. “Aunt Marth will be worried about supper. She left a negro woman to help Mrs. Staley attend to it; but something’s sure to go wrong whenever she’s out of the house.”

“We’ll come again,” said Stockbridge, alluding exclusively to himself and Lyria.

“I think they’d like it; it seems to have done them both good,” smiled Lyria, glancing toward the old woman and the girl as they came down to the waiting car.

Susy Lucy was climbing into the tonneau when her grandmother grabbed her by the arm and swung her around.

“You git in there by the shuffler,” she admonished.

Neither the broker nor Lyria appeared to notice the change, though they made full use of its opportunity. They spoke of the Queensborough undertaking, and Stockbridge’s tone had ceased to be jesting. He promised her a desk in his office, and told her he thought it might be better to have it in the inner room; there were so many interruptions in the outer.

Up to this time it had been his pleasure, in talking with women, to hold forth at some length concerning his fiancée, his opinion being that the subject would be of interest to them. It surprised him to remember how little he had said to Lyria of Miss Barringer, and it really astonished him to recollect that the little he had said had not seemed to catch her attention. Several times, after this occurred to him, he would have thought it well to mention the lady, but somehow Lyria’s other subjects of conversation were going so gayly that this one did not seem, even to him, to come in naturally, and finally and definitely he dropped it.

Over and over again Lyria asked him if he thought her ideas were good, if he really considered that she had business ability; and as often as she asked it with those beguiling tips, he answered in the affirmative, with ever-increasing certainty.

The sun was going down behind Sentinel Mountain, the river was full of broken rose and gold spilled from the sky above, the car glided between two heavens as it crossed the bridge; it seemed opulent, freighted with happiness, taking its way through the mean streets of the river end of town. From the rear of the boarding house, as they approached, sounded the steady shrieks



*As the old man dried dishes, he confided to Aunt Marth his hopes and aspirations for Lyria.*

of an infant, proclaiming that its mother was in the kitchen.

"Miz Staley ortn't to keep the baby in the kitchen, hot as it is," Aunt Marth muttered anxiously. "Why in time she don't make that wuthless little nigger pack it round in the yard I cain't say."

The auto stopped. Aunt Marth was first on the ground.

"Thank ye, Mr. Stockbridge," she offered as she reached the broken brick sidewalk. "I hope you'll have luck a-sellin' out them lots over thar."

She hurried off to relieve her amateur assistant, Susy Lucy following close after, without either thanks or adieus. Lyria lingered with Stockbridge a moment, planning for their next meeting.

The evening light softened the asperities of the ungainly boarding house. The one-eyed cat had finally assembled her family in the spot her unreadable feline heart had chosen. She nourished them proudly in face of all Watauga.

"Don't you love little kittens?" inquired Lyria confidently. "They're so warm, and soft, and cuddly. Aunt Marth might give you one for the office, when they're old enough to leave their mother."

Stockbridge smiled fatuously. There was no use trying to be grown-up with Lyria.

A young man and a young woman were walking in the side yard under the stunted tree; it seemed in tune with the time and the scene that they should be so evidently lovers. Something in the sight of them moved the broker to say in a hushed tone:

"You'll be coming to the office pretty nearly every day, won't you? I can send the car for you just as well as not—and send you back in it—when ever you don't feel like the walk."

"It must be lovely for you to have a great, delightful automobile like this, and be able to take three people out, and make them as perfectly happy as you've made us this afternoon. I envy you. It must make you happy, too," returned Lyria softly.

"It does—very happy—if you enjoyed it," Stockbridge almost whispered.

"Oomp! Oomp! Oomp! Eraw—ug-ug-ug!" groaned the French horn from Japson's window.

Lyria laughed out suddenly, her little white teeth shining; at such times she was Cleopatra of the barge again. Stockbridge got into his car and headed away, looking back at her as she waved to him.

### CHAPTER III.

#### EARTHEN VESSELS.

Supper was very late, but nobody minded, there was so much and such glorious matter for conversation. Tired, hulking fellows hurried in from the hydrant beside the back steps, took their turns at the roller towel and the

comb that hung by its string in front of a small, distorting glass that sometimes gave one an eye in one's cheek, and came scrubbed and damply sleek to their places at table, eager to talk of Stockbridge, ready to contribute inaccurate details as to the enormous sums he had made in recent deals.

Old Captain Japson, with but two front teeth to support a smile that rather sagged between, incited Lyria to go over the automobile ride detail by detail, searching her recollection for matter that would interest them. She needed little urging—she loved sharing her joys. Susy Lucy glowered silently and seemed to have an abiding sense of how strongly Stockbridge would have objected to the discussion of the probable cost of his car, the value of his clothes, the salary of his chauffeur, the unparalleled luxury of his suite in the Patton Hotel, and the magnificence of the mansion he was building up on the bluffs.

Japson had, in his time, been a sort of aristocrat among Aunt Marth's boarders, having had the only room with a fire in it in the winter. But the captain's circumstances had changed; he had come down to a queer little pen cut off from the end of the front hall, which had been intended, perhaps, at some time for a shop. In its front window he looked like a much-worn piece of secondhand goods exposed for sale. But he had accepted his altered fortunes cheerfully, fitting up his tiny chamber like a stateroom, with a couple of built-in bunks, so that he was able to offer Aunt Marth an extra bed for any transient she might choose to give it to.

A board hinged bar fashion across the doorway was his compromise in the matter of fresh air and privacy; on this bar he used to lean to pass the time of day, as he would have styled it, with incomers and outgoers. A derby hat always lay on a shelf ready



to his hand, so that he might tell new acquaintances, and sometimes old, the tale of its acquisition in '83, when Flemister ran for Congress.

"I met 'im in the street the day after 'lection, an' I was wearin' a hat that I'd had sence the war," the old man would open. "He says to me, sezze, 'Hello, Jap—didn't think enough o' me to bet a hat on my 'lection,' sezze, jest like that. I answered him, quick as a flash: 'No,' sezzi, 'I didn't think enough o' you to bet a hat—but I thought enough o' you to vote for you,' sezzi. Blamed if he didn't take me right into Steinman's and get me the finest hat that could be bought for money."

Here the derby was reached down, turned round and round in Japson's knotted old hands, and the gilt lettering of an extinct firm shown on its inner band. Nobody had ever seen Japson wear that hat. In moments of great excitement, even when he wasn't telling the story, he took it down and turned it and looked into it. Perhaps he wanted to be reminded of his manhood, for he had come down to living on a pension, helping with the housework to eke out his board, and his self-respect was sadly infringed upon by the gingham apron he wore to do dishes. The derby hat may have seemed to him a *toga virilis*.

One of his claims to importance in those early affluent days had been a lawsuit that had promised to make him rich. He was the sole surviving heir to a tract of land with copper deposits on it. A company had acquired the mines and was developing them. Somewhere back in the family history, a stepfather had sold the estate while there were still minor children. The deed he had made had been invalid, but the case had been fought till many issues were involved; the old man's money had given out, nobody had been found who believed enough in the suc-

cess of his claim to finance it; his spirit had been broken, and a disappointment had followed disappointment, he had gradually come to talk less and less of his claim and to play more and more on his French horn, a psychological change that had its discomfort for those obliged to listen to him.

Upon Japson must be left the responsibility of saddling the French nation with the origin of the instrument. It appeared to be unclassifiable. Sometimes he admitted that it was "nothin' but an alto."

"Y' see this here in-stru-ment ain't fitted fer to play chunes alone," he would explain laboriously. "Hit's but a second horn. Ef you can jest 'magine the other parts goin' along above, an' comin' along below, an' sorter sy-portin' of it, you'll git what I'm drivin' at."

Then he would "Ooogh!—Oo-ogh!—Oo-ogh!" and "Umph!—Umph!—Umph!" and it was only Lyria who had so far been able to "'magine" the unbreathed melodies that belonged above and below and "sy-portin'" of the French horn. No wonder he loved her. No wonder he talked of her all day long to anybody who would listen to him, and attempted to talk of her to some people who wouldn't. The greatest, the most beautiful thing that could have come into these forlorn days, which found him reduced to playing second horn in life's symphony, all the other instruments having died away from him, was to discover one heart that could so inform the ears belonging to it that they heard him still melodious, still in tune.

Japson's first boat, the *Tennessee Belle*, had plied between Queensborough and Watauga; he had known Lyria's people. When she came, the tale of the lawsuit he would prosecute if he had money was revived, and he found balm in her interest, but more in her belief in him, her supposition that

he was the kind of man who wins lawsuits.

However, to-night such things were forgotten; the mere possibility of riches for Japson could not compete with the arrived wealth of Stockbridge, even with the old captain himself. You might have asked him in what year Flemister ran for Congress and have received no answer. Everybody was as eager as a first-night audience, as keen for the details of Lyria's outing.

The table was long, and not so clean and orderly as usual, because of Aunt Marth's absence during the afternoon. A dejected kerosene lamp with a bad breath went out before the meal was over because it had not been filled. Lyria regarded the two lines of eager faces round the table with unashamed affection. She knew the heart history of each. They had all leaned upon her bosom and communed with her. She was glad to have something joyful to tell them.

What she offered was meat and drink. These overworked men and women—Miss Clara tremulous from an encounter with a dissatisfied customer over an emaciated sewing bill; girls from the box factory, mentally emptied from standing all day to tend a machine that cut and pasted and did their work for them with impish intelligence; men who worked in the plow factory, or at the driving of a dray—they all ate and drank, as it were, of the millionaire's achievements rather than of the indifferent meal set before them.

"You know I'm in partnership with him to boom Queensborough," Lyria said. They all did know it, down to its minutest particulars, but they could not hear of it too often; they listened eagerly while she went on: "Mr. Stockbridge thinks it's certain I'll make a good deal of money. If I do, I'll build you a new house, Aunt Marth, and we'll send Attie to Baltimore to Doctor Channing."

"You'll be buildin' a house," Aunt Marth replied sententiously, "but hit won't be for me—nor I don't want it to be. You study too much about doin' for other folks, honey."

"I wanna go to Baltimore 'n git my laig fixed so I c'n fight," Attie piped—a poor little Atlas finding it hard to uphold his world on groggy pins.

"They ain't no call for her to give things to them that can work," said one of the plow-factory hands, with rather a stern glance in Aunt Marth's direction; "but tippin' a body off as to whar money would make money now an' ag'in—that's what would he'p us all."

He spoke as a man troubled to find investment for spare cash. There was a grumble of assent from the other males.

"That's the advantage of associatin' with them as has," said a drayman. "They git—an' while they're a-gittin' you have a chance at some. Hit's jest like turnin' over his hand for Stockbridge to make a feller rich. He can do it an' never take anythin' out of his own pocket."

The contemplation of such magic occupied the rest of the meal until they all rose and continued their converse afoot in the side yard, on the pavement in front, anywhere that a breath of coolness might be found.

Japson's nightly task was to help Aunt Marth wash up. As the old man dried dishes, the oppressive apron pinned high about his middle, he confided to Aunt Marth his hopes and aspirations for Lyria.

"She minds me of a gal I usedta —" he began, and broke off. He had said that before. It had become his formula in speaking of Lyria Faine. It was an exposition of the hold she had on all of them. She reminded each one of a girl—or a boy—they used to—even if it were only the girl or the boy they used to be. "A gal like that



ort to 'marry money an' a plenty," he went on urgently.

"Well, she will, ef she plays her cards right," contributed Miss Clara, who lingered in the kitchen for further discussion of the great event. "With the holt I can see she's got on 'im, they ain't nothin' needful but to play her cards right."

Aunt Marth looked thoughtful, preoccupied; she was a silent person, more given to deeds than to words, but plainly there was something on her mind. Her one personal outburst of poetry was the making of little cloth birds. The main portion of these fowls was cut from muslin—a scrap of any sort—in the general shape of a bird, seamed, turned, and stuffed with cotton in the manner of a rag doll. The eyes were beads or buttons. Small fans of folded paper were sewed to each side for wings, and a similar fan made the tail. Sometimes a crest was added; in one or two cases a few sprangling stitches of yarn suggested the curled-up feet.

The birds of Aunt Marth's fancy flew, on little short threads, about a foot from the low ceilings of her rooms. Some few she had made of sober-colored fabrics, so that they bore a fair family resemblance to their brothers in the bush outside. More often she had been attracted by the gayety of some scrap, by the bizarre idea of its figure or dot, and a pied bird with wings of figured tissue had resulted. She used to put forth these creations, as a poet writes a sonnet, when she was specially stirred. She gave them to people she liked or admired. One hung over every bed in the house, and now that the experiences of the afternoon urged to winged expression, she moved to consult Miss Clara, a practical source of scraps for their fabrication.

"Blue—hit must be blue," Aunt Marth muttered, as she scraped the sink. "An' yit gingham don't seem

jest right; a bird hadn't ort to be checked."

"I wouldn't put 'em in checks—th' feet 'd never show," said the dressmaker professionally.

"Ye-ah," agreed Aunt Marth, "but I most gin'ally leave the feet off. Somehow I don't like to study about a bird havin' feet. What's the fruits of feet? Ef you've got 'em, you're 'bliged to walk. Looks like wings ort to be sufficient."

Lyria, coming through with a water pitcher, stepping to the hydrant outside the kitchen door to supply the washstand in her room—you did your own room work at Aunt Marth's, and Lyria was one of the few who had a washstand—stopped a moment to listen.

"The angels have both," she put in unexpectedly.

"Uh-huh," sighed Aunt Marth, "an' that ain't never pleased me yit. I can't abide the looks of a angel. I know in my soul it'd rile me to see anythin' er anybody a-walkin' round on two feet an' breshin' with them white feather wings. No—ef y've got wings, fly. Ef the Lord has seed fit to give ye but feet, you'll be obliged to walk, anyhow."

Lyria filled her pitcher, and went on. The two women looked after her.

"I made a bird to go over her bed," said Aunt Marth, "out of a piece of that there green-an'-white polky-dot purk-kale you made for Suze Luce to w'ar to the 'Piscable picnic. She brung home a green-aiged paper napkin, an' I used hit for the wings an' tail. Seemed like to me that bird was wilder than the rest, an' I had a feelin' to give hit to her. She minds me of a bird, anyhow."

"She minds me of a gal I usedta —" contributed Japson inadequately, as they turned out the kitchen lamp.

The night was warm, drippy, a limp Tennessee spring night, calculated to

bring the gardens forward; a night to dream of one's childhood, to long intensely for the thing denied. Aunt Marth's boarding house was not constructed for coolness, nor was the ventilation adequate, except in winter. The roof was corrugated iron, and the old woman slept in a little garret directly under that, with only the asbestos Suze Luce for company. The bedrooms in the story below were not so bad, if you left your door open.

Lyria rose after she had gone to bed, and set her door ajar, propping it with a piece of wood. The languid breeze came along the corridor, and fluttered the paper-napkin wings of the green-spotted bird. She lay down again, and soon those wings were beating the ether of her dreams.

In those dreams she rode no more in a purple-awned barge. Antony and Cleopatra had taken to an automobile, a great, splendid car that climbed cloud hills and swept across rainbow bridges. Her Mark Antony was a prince of lovers, who would throw a world away for her whim. And yet one may guess that had this gorgeous dream being walked instead of riding, he would, as Aunt Marth said, have "breshed" with powerful pinions. He was certainly of the angel breed. He and Lyria flung out blessings on all the world as they traversed the welkin, speeding down the Milky Way to pick up a sort of hierarchy of derelicts, who might miraculously ride with them and not at all overcrowd the car. Those who knew the daylight Stockbridge would have been surprised—but then Stockbridge had not looked into their eyes with those warmed, glowing glances he gave Lyria.

The spotted bird flew unwearied on joyous paper-napkin wing. Lyria, cheek on hand, long eyelashes resting softly upon the rose flush below them, dreamed the whole night through.

And did Stockbridge dream? There

is something inconceivably impudent, if not indecent, about attempting to penetrate the dreams of dignified people. Sleep must have loosed the stiff, conventional harness in which his spirit daily hauled its load of life. Of course, he dreamed sometimes. He had once detailed to an associate a dream of a fish against whom he held a promissory note, and upon whom he found it difficult to get service, rushing to the edge of the stream, paper in hand, only to see his scaly debtor swim away. This, however, had been on the fishing trip at Queensborough, and, as it had achieved only a clumsy mixture of his work-a-day employments and his vacation diversion, it cannot be said to have promised much.

Perhaps we would better close the door of that handsome suite in the Patton that housed his slumbers, and leave ourselves to guess that, if Lyria's piping had beguiled him so far as we have seen upon the path, night and dreams would, no doubt, find him still following her aberrant, inconsequent footsteps.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### GOD'S FREEMAN.

Lyria became a perilously privileged guest in Stockbridge's place. However busy he might be, the broker always found time for her. The desk set aside for the Queensborough work was in his private sanctum. She was free of that august spot, where princes and potentates of the money power in Watauga were sometimes denied.

The office force was in a conspiracy of silence, not even daring to look the astonishment it felt. She had charmed them all; not one of them but loved her. Yet that Stockbridge should unbend, that they should see his cold eyes search the office eagerly of a morning, and brighten at her presence, or strive to veil disappointment when she failed

to come, these were marvels of which none might speak. Such things could be contemplated only in silence, approached walking backward, as it were. For surely the day would come when the broker would recover and demand forgetfulness of them all.

Susy Lucy, having personally negotiated the introduction of Lyria Faine into her employer's scheme of life, and feeling, therefore, a sense of individual responsibility, trembled when she looked on at the little woman's confidence, her negligent air of power. It was like seeing a small child play with a cross dog. Lyria was friendly with Stockbridge, almost patronizing; she had as many irons in the fire of life as he; her days were so tremendously interesting that she almost forgot him betweenwhiles, leaving him and returning half reluctant, putting him in the position of a suitor, allowing herself to give way to his urgencies. Had it been otherwise, there would have been no story to tell.

But it is a painful fact in life, as in seasonal and diurnal changes, that blossoms reach their apogee of beauty just before frost, that sunrise precludes nothing more delicate and glowing than the common light of day, by which one may detect dust in the corners of rooms, crow's-feet at the corners of beauty's eyes. The pretty pink dawning of romance in Stockbridge's life came to its full—and ushered in a period of plain common sense, daylight with space for labor, but no illusions. In this bleak illumination, he discredited the exquisite auroral hours. Lyria had been near to making a poet of him for the time—a jackass he put it now.

His wedding day was approaching. The wife he had chosen was to conquer for him and dominate for him the social world of Watauga, as he had conquered and dominated its financial world. He had judiciously selected a

woman with ample capacities for further conquest of the sort, since he himself had ambitions reaching beyond his present field. Of course, playing at land speculation with Lyria Faine, as he had once played at Antony and Cleopatra with her, might have been thought by some people to be a thing that matrimony—even approaching matrimony—would deny him. He did not hold with any such ideas. Yet the time had come when he meant to put a stop to that folly—because it bored him. In fact, as Lyria began to show herself more than a little trying to a person of his character and views, he experienced the rush of virtue usual to gentlemen in his situation at such crises.

The decision to be done with her was new, and therefore strong, when she came into his office one morning, a week or so after the Morningside expedition, somewhat depressed and apprehensive that he would be angry and lecture, and announced that she must give up the Queensborough partnership, since her ability to invest was gone.

"I had a little money left," she said to him, sitting in a chair beside his desk, laying a small hand upon the edge of it, looking earnestly into his face. "only about fifteen hundred dollars, because it's cost me something to live—and there was a man at Queensborough that had to have a commission for something I didn't quite understand. When I got down here to Watauga, he wrote after me, and I sent the money back to him. I'd rather do that than quarrel. Then there were some friends I made here who needed—well, there was fifteen hundred left, and I intended to invest that, but I've—I've—"

"You've lent it to somebody," he supplied, the impatience he felt flooding into his tone like angry water over an inadequate barrier.

The intimacy between them more than amply warranted his hectoring her on money matters, and Lyria was the

kind of woman that a man inevitably hectors when he does not flatter. She seemed glad to let it go at that, anxious not to enter into any details. She merely nodded.

"I haven't anything to invest," she said cheerfully, "so I thought I'd come and tell you. You'll maybe want to go on without me—or perhaps I can come in later."

Stockbridge had got up in an ugly humor that morning. He smiled at her suggestion, but not very pleasantly. What might on another day have appealed to him, now irritated.

"I don't think I'll take it up at present," he said. "Is there anything else about which I could be of service to you?"

"Oh, no, thank you." She got to her feet with a distinct expression of relief. "I was afraid you'd be put out with me, somehow. If you don't mind—there's no harm done."

She smiled into his eyes with undiminished sweetness. Squabbling with Lyria was like quarreling with spring itself—she just went on shining.

He had an instant's glimpse of the truth. Momentarily he saw her as she was—a little green tree, rooted fast in the ancient soil of life, uttering her friendships as the tree utters its leaves, joyously, multitudinously; tossing them to the breeze, careless of the fall of one, since another immediately sprouted to take its place.

She was turning to go, leaving him without the formality of a farewell.

"Good-by," he said hastily, putting out his hand.

For the first time since he had met her as a woman, it occurred to him that Lyria was a dangerous individual—dangerous to him. He was ready to laugh at the idea when she was gone, of course, yet it crossed his mind strongly as he stood holding her hand and saying good-by.

For a week after this he missed her

from his days—when he thought of her at all. Altogether, he dropped pretty comfortably back into the old routine, getting few reminders of his folly. People were not being paid to remind Stockbridge of things he preferred to forget.

Since that first outing across the river, Aunt Marth had never seen the broker, but she had daily watched the great car stop at the curb for Lyria to set forth, or welcomed her returning with hands full of flowers from Epstein's, or a big pot of blossoming hyacinths on her lap, an offering to her landlady and the season. This was almost as sentimentally inspiring as to be present at the courtship that seemed to be progressing so favorably.

"Miss Barringer!" she would mutter scornfully. "That man couldn't any more get away from Lyria Faine than he could get away from his own self."

Thus she stitched happy thoughts into the blue bird she made from a scrap that Miss Clara had furnished. Under its wings, despite the disposal of her last fifteen hundred dollars, the falling through of the Queensborough scheme—on account of these things, apparently—Lyria slumbered sweetly. She seemed to have cast off an oppression, and was in high feather as she played at being a real worker, and dreamed of jobs and piece work; visions as sweet beneath the blue bird's breast as those the green-spotted warbler had sung to her of the millionaire in his car.

She was physically tired when she came home from job hunting, but the enormous interest of what she had encountered in her rounds was almost beyond telling. She would follow Aunt Marth into the kitchen, and explain volubly the advantages of a place in a store, a chance to work in a factory, an agency, the undertaking of a small business of her own.

Aunt Marth, sad and wise and old, looked down at her own bustling mov-



*"He's got it on—he's got it on—he's got the hat on!" the baby's mother uttered, in a whispered, whistling shriek.*

ing hands, and said little. She had known a good many hopeful workers come to the city, but never one quite like Lyria. In a day or two she became alarmed, and began to ask questions. Had Lyria given up the Queensborough business? Had she quarreled with Stockbridge?

The little woman replied with insouciance; she seemed to have some difficulty in getting back to the point

of view that had made the Queensborough scheme important. She informed Aunt Marth that she was on perfectly good terms with Mr. Stockbridge, but that she had disposed of the money she had intended to invest with him in another way.

The mistress of the house was often called in to arbitrate when her boarders, in their poverty, borrowed from each other. She now set out on a sys-

tematic campaign to find where Lyria's money had been lent; and she gave Japson a piece of her mind when she discovered that it had gone into his lawsuit. However, her first words failed utterly to touch the exaltation of his mood.

"It ain't a loand, as a body may say," he maintained. "She's bought an in-trust in the suit, as I see it. Ef we win, er, rather, when we win—for you know, in reason, with all that new evidence I've got about grandpappy's brother marryin' one of the Maisery gals, and her bein' kin to the——"

"Yes; but ef ye lose," put in Aunt Marth. "Accordin' to my experience of 'em, lawsuits always does go agin' ye. What ef you lose?"

"Why, they cain't always go agin' ye," protested Japson reasonably. "They're bound to go fer somebody, some time—an' why not us, with all that new evi-dence——"

"They don't," said Aunt Marth bitterly. "A lawsuit never was knowed to go in favor of anybody ye'd ever seed. You've got a company to fight—o' course they'll win. Then whar'll her money be?"

There was no keeping the thing secret. With the dissolution of the Queensborough partnership, the household lost its staple of daily excitement. There had not been one among them too humble to thrill with the hope of personal gain from the proximity of the millionaire. It is the fate of such men to be regarded by their fellow creatures almost exclusively as feasible approaches to affluence. A feeling that they had been mulcted produced resentment that found voice among Aunt Marth's boarders as soon as they knew Japson to be responsible for their loss.

The old man became a sort of pariah. Desperately discountenanced, he fled continually to the cellar, where he was supposed to split kindling. He had entered into a treaty with Mrs. Staley not

to take the French horn there with him, because its subterranean grumblings waked the baby. Now, in his misery, he smuggled the contraband instrument downstairs for comfort and company. He did not mean to play on it, but merely to breathe his grief softly into the mouthpiece and receive whispered consolation.

The treacherous thing had a way of refusing to respond at times, remaining scornfully mute while he blew and blew, with puffed cheeks, and then, just as he gave up, breaking loose with a blurt of sound like the moving of a bureau. Amid the dust and cobwebs of the little cellar, the French horn put him to it in this fashion once more, seeming to join the array of those who were against him. He relinquished hope, with a sigh—there came a blare of sound that shook the house from its mid-afternoon calm.

"You hush that horn," Aunt Marth cried down the stairway, in exasperation. She was in the kitchen, getting supper. "I'm sorry for what I said to you a-yistidday, an' we'll never name it ag'in if you don't borry any more from her."

She was at that moment unaware that Lyria had no more money to lend. The little woman was late for the meal that night, and discussion of her affairs went round the board, a loving cup of aloes and coloquintida.

"Huntin' a job, pore child," Aunt Marth sipped, "an' no mo' idee how to go about it than a stray kitten."

"Some folks don't know pyore gold when they see it." Mrs. Staley drank deep. She had made the remark frequently to Bolivar in the comparative privacy of their chamber. "It's my beliefs that rich men git so they don't know what they do want."

"She must uv played her cards mighty poorly," put in grim Miss Clara, of the black brows. "If it was me, an' I'd had him as near hooked as she had,



I'd go to that man's office and have it out with him. Sometimes fear of the speech o' people'll bring 'em up to the scratch, when jest plain love won't."

"Somebody ort to go to 'im an' tell 'im what they think of 'im," contributed one of the men from the plow works huskily.

Japson got up, leaving a half-finished plate of white beans. He fled into his little cell, and they could hear a tremulous, but resonant, thumping and bumping which told that he was climbing into the convolutions of his horn. No doubt this tower of brass seemed his last refuge from what they were saying. Even so, he could still hear them till he got the music going.

"You all hush," Susy Lucy ordered briefly. She was notably silent at her grandmother's table, but the present conversation was more than she could bear. "Miz Faine an' Mr. Stockbridge never was nothin' more'n business partners, an' now she's decided not to invest, and he's—he's— She ain't got no more money, an' he ain't got no more use for her," she concluded doggedly.

A blubbing moan from Japson's French horn startled the entire table.

"For the good land—what ails the man?" ejaculated Mrs. Staley petulantly.

She got no answer; the horn, too, was silent as the old man bowed over it in uncomfortable grief. He could no longer deceive himself—Lyria's "chance," as he had long seen, was "slippin' away from 'er"—and he was to blame!

"An' she minded me so of that gal I usedta—" he breathed to his brazen, hollow companion.

For a day or two he laired in his own little room, scuttling away from the table as soon as Lyria left it, lest he hear more, popping out at people as they passed to tell them that "a gal like Lyrie Adene ort to marry money, an' a-plenty," that he "couldn't see no rea-

son agin' it. Ef Mr. Stockbridge understood that she's jest investigated her money, I doubt not he'd see some things different."

His urgencies were coldly received. Somebody had failed them all; they could not make a culprit of Lyria, though she lost caste sadly with Miss Clara; but here was a scapegoat of the most conventional pattern—nobody could ask a more suitable person to be hard on that Japson. It came to be, after a time, that he had scarcely a listener in the house except Bolivar Staley. The big, clumsy mountaineer, having returned from Texas on Lyria's money and having not as yet found employment in Watauga, furnished the old man's single, but highly sympathetic, listener as he described endlessly Stockbridge's inferential pledges, and argued heatedly of Lyria's deserts. He began always with the girl that Lyria reminded him of, and mentioned frequently, as he went along, his opinion that Lyrie Adene ought to marry money—had a right to expect it.

Staley agreed; but somehow this did not seem—as they both realized, and as Staley openly said—to get them "any for'arder."

"Some man person ort to go to him an' speak up to him," Bolivar laid out the case with leisurely emphasis. Japson trembled to the roots of his being with a shattering and sobering vision of that interview, a conviction that he was the man person. It kept him awake nights; it interfered with his playing of the French horn; he brooded on it as he had never brooded since the days of "the gal he usedta—"

## CHAPTER V.

### APRIL FOOL!

It was a soggy, sordid Monday morning that jarred poor old Japson into action; a merciless kind of day, such as sends romance to the wall and makes

the cruelties of existence apparent. The weather was hot and wet; vegetation sprouted unhealthily, and the cheeks of life sagged. The captain had failed to split any kindling. In fact, he had done nothing since breakfast but sit in his doorway, reach down the hat at intervals, and stare into its depths. About ten o'clock he came out of his crystal gazing with sudden energy. For the first time in this history, he put the legendary hat on his head, rose tremulously, feeling with his stick, and walked out of the door.

At this hour, the house was dirty from end to end, because it had to be. Aunt Marth in the cellar, splitting the wood that he had neglected, was warned by a sixth sense of the old man's unusual movements. She came running up the back stairs and dashed into the hall in time to catch sight of his retreating heels.

"Well, I vow!" she exclaimed. "I'd like to know whose cat's dead now?"

She followed to the front door. Mrs. Staley rose up, with the baby in her arms, and came hurtling across the side yard.

"He's got it on—he's got it on—he's got the hat on!" the baby's mother uttered, in a whispered, whistling shriek. "Whar in time do you reckon he's a-goin'?"

The women watched him stumble away—he was not exactly lame, but, as Suze Luce said, he stuttered with his feet—but since he belonged to the dominant sex, though not a dominating example of it, neither Aunt Marth nor the Staley woman called any inquiry after him.

Just around the corner, where the hoardings hid them from sight of the house, lurked three urchins. It was the first of April, and they were looking for victims. The coming of Japson was unbelievably apt. Attie, of the brace, came limping up and hung upon him.

"Where you goin'?" Where you goin'?" he demanded, diverting the old man, while the other too attached a tag to the back of his coat.

They saw him move on, with it dangling, cackled the inane mirth of the small boy, and waited for another gull.

If those whom Japson met on his way noticed the card, they were too much in the spirit of the day or too busy to inform him of it. One or two negroes turned shining, black faces and chuckled at the plight of the old white man, but none of them spoiled the joke.

He was headed for Stockbridge's office. The impossible called for doing, and he conceived himself the man to do it. He plodded along the street, his head down, as if overweighted by the historic hat, his jaws moving a little, seeing nothing, going over in his own mind what he meant to say to the broker, the case he would lay before him, daring some faint excursions of hope toward the response he would get and the joy of seeing Lyria once more radiant, dispensing generousities from the store of her rich suitor. He was a little daunted at the grandeur of the Commercial Building, the magnificence of its hallways, the machinery of its lift, and the directions the elevator man called after him, yet he reached the office, still wearing the tag, was admitted to the inner sanctum, and confronted Stockbridge himself.

"Do I understand that you are related to Mrs. Faine?" inquired the broker frostily, when the old man had made his blundering entry into the question of Lyria, Lyria's money, Lyria's undertaking, and her association with Stockbridge.

"Well, not adzackly. I've known her folks sence time was. I used to run a boat on the river between here and Queensborough. I've hauled her father an' her grandfather before him on my boat. I knowed Faine in the

days of his first wives, afore he married his present widdler. That marriage was——"

"We weren't discussing Mrs. Faine's marriage," put in Stockbridge, mention of those dead ladies and their deceased spouse as stale fish in his nostrils.

"No," agreed Japson. "Looks like to me hit was a poor move—best forgot, now it's over."

He gazed hopefully at Stockbridge. The hat—which he had not removed, seeming to consider it in some degree a garment of ceremony or defense—rocked a bit on his tremulous old head.

"What is it that you want to tell me about Mrs. Faine and her money?" Stockbridge inquired, short and harsh. "As I understand it, she's lost or lent what she had to some irresponsible party. Women like that always do. There ought to be a law against their being intrusted with funds."

The broker's voice was going on, sharp, dry, staccato, crackling a bit with the crisp edge of irritation, when Japson began to make deprecating noises in his throat. The old hands groped aimlessly. One could fancy that he was reaching for his French horn. A few gurgles from it would have cleared the social atmosphere for him mightily. Stockbridge checked himself, and looked inquiry.

"Waal, not adzackly that," Japson repeated his formula. "I wouldn't say the party she loaned her money to was adzackly irresponsible, nor that she had adzackly loaned the money. Hit's this-a-way: She has, as a body may say, bought an intrust in the persecution of a lawsuit. Ef we win—or, ruther, when we win——"

"I think there's no more to be said, Mr.—er—Japson," Stockbridge concluded the matter swiftly, getting to his feet. "Mrs. Faine has lent you her money, I see. Did she send you to me?"

"Lord, no!" breathed Japson. "I

reckon she'd e'en about w'ar me out ef she knowed I'd come hyar. And yit—she minds me of a gal I usedta——"

As usual, he got no further with that speech, but stood staring into the depths of the hat, which he appeared to have taken off for the purpose. Memory of the "gal he usedta——" swamped further utterance. His faded old eyes came up again to Stockbridge's, and something of his meaning got across to the broker. The millionaire was suddenly reminded of the boy he "usedta——" Vague tendernesses, bits of broken hopes, things denied his childhood, of which Lyria had in some mysterious way become a part, or lost—left upon its threshold—began to come back to him poignantly. In that moment it seemed to him as easy to sever himself from that childhood as to give up Lyria. Moving, he felt the silken mesh of the net in which he was taken. The lion or bearded pard roars and plunges under such circumstances; Stockbridge was unnecessarily savage with Japson.

"Well, you've got all her money," he said contemptuously. "There's nothing here for you to get. I'll bid you good morning, Mr. Japson. I have an engagement."

The old man shuffled out dolefully enough. As he turned his back, the tag he wore became apparent. Stockbridge's hand went out promptly to the bell; when Edmiston answered it, he was informed of the untoward decoration and sent to remove it. He came up with Japson at the elevator shaft.

"It's April Fools' Day, you know," the fresh-faced young fellow said apologetically, as he detached the card and handed it to its wearer, who stood a dejected moment turning it in his hands.

"Must 'a' been them boys that was with Attie put it on thar—yes, that's jest when," he said.

"They didn't mean any harm—it's April Fools' Day," Edmiston repeated.

Again Japson read the ticket in straggling, childish print: "Kick me."

"Thanky for takin' of it off," he said. "An' yit they couldn't 'a' put on a better one. Them's my sentiments—as th' feller says."

The lift was stopping at Stockbridge's floor. Before the old man could get in, the Peverend Hilary Brand got out, accompanied by a rather pale young fellow dressed in heavy, gray clothing, rough-surfaced, unusual in cut—English, if Japson had known it. The old man nodded to the curate, and glanced at his companion, who looked, with his sulky face and coarse clothing, like a high-grade mechanic out of a job. Japson was drawn to him for this reason, unaware that the sulks were those of an overindulged aristocrat, the clothing the latest thing in Piccadilly.

As the old man stood, bewildered, the lift went up to the top of the building, and Hilary Brand lingered a moment to speak. When the elevator came back, and Japson was laboriously getting into it, he saw Brand and the young man who had been with him entering Stockbridge's suite.

The stock of the Morningside Land Company was owned heavily in the East. In fact, old Cyrus Munson, the great man of Wall Street, was interested in it. Munson had long served Stockbridge for a model. What the old man did with Wall Street, Stockbridge intended to do with Watauga. When Munson resigned the whip and lines up there, as he must some time, Stockbridge vaguely hoped that he might be at hand, an aspirant for the driver's seat in that bigger race.

Almeric Baghot was old Munson's grandson, with an English father, an Oxford education, and a record of which Stockbridge was by no means unaware. His grandfather had sent him down to be taken care of somewhere in the Morningside Land Company's administrative offices. Of course, Stock-

bridge understood that the boy was to keep an eye on them for the Eastern stockholders, and his youth, his inexperience, most of all the private record the broker held, promised to make the newcomer easy to handle. Stockbridge received him genially.

He showed the young fellow something of the office end of the company's business, then glanced at his watch, found that it was little past ten o'clock, and suggested that they go across the river and see the new suburb that was being laid out on the ridges there.

"My car is down at the door, and if you gentlemen have time, we'll go and look at that part of the property, and be back here for lunch at twelve."

It was instinctively that he chose to take them over, now, at once, to the spot where his companionship with Lyria Faine had begun. As he and Brand and Baghot surveyed the ground in a legitimate, businesslike manner, there would be no reason for remembrance of the little woman and the queer party who had traveled that way a few weeks before. A decorous lunch at the restaurant on the top floor of his office building would have no reminiscence of the striped candy, and crackers, and cheese of that other day. The conversation would certainly not concern itself with old love letters and pathetic spinsters who had never had a lover—Lord!

They got downstairs and into the car, Baghot saying very little. Stockbridge liked that. He saw the boy sullen, aloof, and believed him, therefore, negligible. Of late the Eastern stockholders had been showing a disposition to make themselves felt, and their vice president, who had his own ideas as to the quick turning over of values in Watauga, the swift graduating to larger spheres, meant to block their interference before it got seriously in his way. Such big things as this occupied his mind, to the exclusion of all others.

Again he passed through Mountain City, again he picked up McTweedy on his motor cycle, and by the time they reached the Scotchman, Stockbridge found, with incredulous irritation, that Baghot's monosyllables and brief phrases had begun to link themselves together into an arraignment of the present method of subdividing the Morningside tract.

"Of course, I don't know your section or your people, as yet," Baghot said, "but it seems to me a mistake to take a fine estate like this and cut it up into such holdings as are only fit for villagers' cottages."

"You certainly don't know or understand any part of America," agreed Stockbridge. "We don't have estates and villagers or cottages over here. As long as every man's a sovereign, I suppose his house is a palace."

"They hardly look it—what?" rejoined Baghot coolly, surveying the few poor little boxes, built with a shameless eye to economy, smothered with cheap paint, and falling into hopeless disrepair.

"This is the Mountain City tract," said Stockbridge stiffly. "It was subdivided and put on the market two years ago—before Morningside was thought of."

He spoke with brevity. According to his theory, women and men not in business should believe what was told them—and believe it quick!

"The stuff belongs to another company, eh? Well, you see what kind of purchasers their policy has brought them. It'll bear discussion."

"Oh, certainly, certainly," agreed Stockbridge, realizing that when he got Baghot into a directors' meeting, he could silence him better.

"Would you think maybe to take him up to the hill tract?" suggested McTweedy. He dearly loved a lord, and the fact that Baghot's father was remotely related to a titled person ap-

pealed to him immensely. Stockbridge's reply was to motion his two companions into the car, get in after them, and give Bob his orders.

It was perfectly natural, seeing that there was no road, that Bob should take the motor up by exactly the track he had followed before. The grass was a little greener, the wild flowers more abundant, but when they arrived at the corner of Lyria's lot, it seemed to Stockbridge that she might only the moment before have gone over the curve of the hill to help Aunt Marth and Susy Lucy hunt for blue curled mint. He could see her running up from the corner stake to lay out that front walk. His memory played him a photographic trick, and showed her turning, with puckered brow, to appeal to him as to the fronting of that house of hers that would never be built. All at once he was aware of feeling a little queer, and decided that his nerves were out of order.

"I think these are the lots, Mistah Stockbridge," suggested Bob, with the officiousness of ignorance. "Right here's where the lady showed you the propeh way to run the streets and put in the front walks."

His employer merely glared at him, as they got out of the auto at Lyria's corner.

"That place looks as if it had been laid out for a good-sized building site," said Brand. "Aren't those stakes put there for a curved front walk?"

The intolerable McTweedy, exploding himself up the hill on his motor cycle, leaped off and presented the matter to the new visitors. It was a front walk he had laid out to please a customer Mr. Stockbridge had brought over a week or so ago—a most sensible woman—a lady who understood the laying out of suburban properties in a manner that McTweedy found marvelous. The broker walked away in help-

less rage, and stood with his back to them.

We have accepted wireless telegraphy as a modern miracle; those who dabble in ancient magic say that there is, and has always been, communication afloat in the air that may be received by any one who makes himself receptive to it. Stockbridge, standing apart from the other men, staring out over the valley toward the town, veiled in its mist, the river between, his feet squarely planted in the place she had told him was a violet bed, heard Lyria's voice murmuring at his ear.

Again he sat under the pine and listened to her prattle of old love letters and childhood; he heard her impractical estimate of life—and suddenly no other was valid. The sacred considerations of business, the importance of railroading the affairs of the Morningside Land Company through on schedule, turning over the money invested in it swiftly, discrediting Baghot if he ever attempted having a mind of his own—such considerations shriveled before memory of her and her foolish wisdom.

He was set for big things in bigger places; but she seemed to have found the biggest thing of all, to be holding it high in her weak, inept hands, and receding from him. He was letting her go.

Good heavens—what nonsense! The woman was a mere acquaintance. She was a foolish little person; to regard her as one who could influence his life and his opinions was more than absurd.

He took refuge from her in the road boss, who came up from below and gave him columns of nice, cool figures, chunks of reality warranted to knock out phantoms, such verity as had heretofore been his meat and drink.

But when the man was gone, he bowed his head and forgot his surroundings. Lyria, having been barred out, had gained strength. He was not

an imaginative man—the dream of the fish and the promissory note had so far been about his greatest reach—but in that moment the daylight seemed to darken over the hill, and it was night. The spangled dome was very high and wide above these rolling lands—and Lyria's home was built where she had said it would be built. It was all alight. Its windows beckoned to the man who came up the winding path, his eyes fixed upon them. Stockbridge saw the man, and was the man.

He raised his head with a start, and looked fiercely around, clutching for his skepticism, his practical point of view, as Samson might have grabbed at the curls on his shoulders. The investigation was satisfactory. He had not been shorn of his money greed. He believed nothing that he could not see or touch or turn into good, round dollars. An accredited preacher on salary could attend to his soul on Sundays; he wanted nothing of it in working hours.

He went over to where the three men stood, and quarreled fiercely for five minutes about the size of the lots. At the end of that time he suggested brusquely that they climb into the car and go back for lunch, as all that had been said was nonsense—and nothing was ever accomplished by such discussions.

Young Almeric, however, displayed what was back of his sulky countenance. He might be a lightweight, who knew more about polo than promoting, but having come to see this portion of the Morningside property, he went remorselessly over every foot of it, and expressed an opinion as to its present handling that coincided exactly with Lyria Faine's. He fetched a circle, walked up the curved path as Mc-Tweedy had staked it out, paused in front of Lyria's phantom house, said his say laconically, glumly—and sat down on the "front steps," where Stockbridge and Lyria had sat side by



side. There was a breathless moment in which the broker came near ordering him up.

Sitting thus, the young fellow looked across, nodding toward Sentinel Peak, and remarked:

"Good place for a flight—what?"

"A flight?" echoed Stockbridge.

"I'm interested in aviation," said Baghot. "I don't care a bally hang about your lots or your land company. You might cut 'em in stars and shoe strings if I had a good biplane, and a chance to work out a theory that I—Are we going to be late for lunch?"

"We certainly are," said the broker, as he bundled them into the car.

Talk on the way back was desultory. Stockbridge had no intention of defeating Baghot in a merely wordy argument—the directors' meeting for him. They reached the restaurant without further clash of opinions.

The Commercial was having trouble with the waiters' union, and had recently displaced its negro men with young white women; the figures in black, with snowy aprons, with the inevitable ruffled cap, looked trim and cool at the various tables. Because of Baghot's thoroughness, they were late, and had the big dining room almost entirely to themselves. Stockbridge had traversed half its length, going toward his preferred table in the corner, when he noticed that Brand was lagging, apparently making for a place nearer the center of the room. As usual, the broker held on his way, unchecked by the other's movement. It was not until Brand was getting into a chair and Baghot already seated that Stockbridge noted the waitress, standing ready with pencil and pad to serve the table he had chosen. It was Lyria Faine.

TO BE CONTINUED.



### April Joys

**B**UT yesterday the lashing rain  
Drowned the dull earth, and hung the trees  
With unshed tears, to drop again  
At the first shudder of the breeze.

Yet here's a day that winks with sun,  
A sky all spread with bluebell blue—  
The sort of day that brings to one  
Fair sights to last the long hours through.

Already here are three! A bird  
Toiling with straws for building stuff  
Thrice her wee length; an aspen, stirred  
(The merest whiff of wind's enough)

Through its white stem and budding crown;  
While, last and best of things to cheer,  
I meet *you*, tripping into town,  
Blue-eyed, sun-haired as April, dear!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

## ON WORK

By Edwin L. Sabin

WORK, as we view it, is apt to depend upon who's doing the working. In fact, work depends upon who, when, where, why, what, how, and other relatives, including the family past, present, and future. It likewise is compounded with interrogatives, exclamations, and the capital large and small, although really capital doesn't cut very much figure.

Here let us leave the grammar and cross to the dictionary. The dictionary says that work is "effort or exertion directed to the accomplishment of some purpose or end," or is "toil, labor, striving." But that first definition is sufficient; it practically puts a quietus upon any hope of escape from work.

Plainly, even a sloth, hanging motionless back down, must sink in his claws to hold fast, and he is working to that end. Also, he is breathing, and encouraging his physical processes, so that he will live.

Such is the melancholy lesson taught by Webster's dictionary and the South American sloth—the presumed idle sloth, happy in his idleness. If we don't work, we die; and who knows but that after death we work on? For many of us are called away with apparently so much unaccomplished.

Hurrah for work! Hooray! "In the morning, when thou art sluggish at rousing thee, let this thought be present: 'I am rising to a man's work.'" See the Marcus Aurelius Antoninus "Breakfast Chit-Chat" column in the Roman *Daily Forum*, issue of March 23, 168 A. D.

The paragraph above would indicate that I myself am a very fiend for work, and that Marcus Aurelius was also. I can't answer for Marcus; but as for me, I certainly love work, and highly favor it. Work? By all means! Nothing makes me so downright peevish as to see people going to the ocean or the lakes or the mountains or elsewhere countryward when I have to work. They ought to be working; it is good for them. And then, when I note them tugging at suit cases, steamer-rug rolls, and children, while I sit

grandly on a stool and draw figures down a column, I can imagine that they are working hard, after all.

Even when they go to the ball game they work, and they'll come home hot, and hoarse, and spent, fit only to eat dinner and read the evening paper; whereas we of the eight-hour day are prepared to mow the lawn for recreation.

So work and play are only terms of kind and degree. Privately, I often think that if I could but chuck this course of growing humpbacked over an office desk in the shade, and straighten out by digging gardens or sewer ditches in the sun, I'd be perfectly content. And again, I've actually had gardeners and sewer-ditch diggers envy me my easy time—which isn't an easy time at all, but is the most loathsome, slavish kind of galley drudgery, as I can prove by any companion worker—and wish that they had the same "snap."

To the nonfisherman, the feat of following a trout stream is a herculean effort; while the angler would simply be bored to death whittling under a nice, shady tree.

The foregoing remarks may sound like platitudes; but that just proves the more that there's no new-found way of escaping from work—according to Webster's dictionary: "Effort or exertion directed to the accomplishment of some purpose or end!"

Mr. Webster doesn't specify the purpose or end, whether that be the purpose of having what we think is a good time, or the end of routing *lupus domesticus*, who, camping at our front threshold, seems to possess more of a comeback in the way of lives than the *felis domestica* of the rear threshold. As for the good time, it is only what we deem a good time, and other people might not consider it a good time at all. They might achieve their good times by footing up a ledger or mowing a lawn.

I never have been afforded a close observation of the so-called leisure class, though I have read about them in English novels and in American "smart-set" stories. The members of the pseudo-leisure class with whom I have occasionally been associated have struck me as being of a temporary and spasmodic order, and usually they were doing a heap of thinking and planning while they appeared to rest.

It may be great to be able to open one's eyes and mouth at, say, ten in the morning of a week day, in bed luxurious, and murmur languidly: "Marie, my hair and slippers;"

or: "Jeems"—I never have known a Jeems—"my bawth and shave." But I don't fancy that these envied and excessively slothful personages derive any more satisfaction from an ease without accomplishment than we do—we who breakfast at six, arrive at seven, leave at five, and recreate until eight or nine—from work with accomplishment.

The human being who most nearly approximates to a workless state is age on the retired list; although to age the acts of dressing and undressing, of being warm and being cold, of being comfortable and uncomfortable, are work. And have you in mind any example of age sitting in the shade who does not envy youth hustling in the sun? Can you conjure up any bona-fide case of enforced inactivity who does not covet the job of activity? And which are the fondest memories of age—his hours of idleness, or his hours of hard work, which the dictionary calls "toil"?

Believe me, the pride and satisfaction of age is work—a trait that can make him very aggravating, for if anything does make a fellow irritable it is a man sitting still and urging him, the other fellow, to trot around lively because "work is good for people." Yet when I arrive at the age of apparent idleness, I shall do the same, because I know it's a true saying, albeit disagreeable when a chap is tired and poor, and fish are biting.

It isn't work itself, it isn't the effort toward the accomplishment of some regular purpose, that grinds; what does grind, occasionally, is the treadmill effect of striving and not arriving. And I think that I see the reason why so many wealthy men who can well afford to retire from active business don't and won't.

We may call them avaricious; we may call them foolish; we may sniff and wonder. But it isn't the accumulation of more money that they are after; it's the accumulation of more results, the sense of power. So sometimes after you have worked and won—have worked so as to be dog tired physically and human tired mentally, but have accomplished—looking back, does the chore seem so terrific and obnoxious as at the beginning?

The only relief from work is the results. Following the results, there must be more results—and more work. As the modern adage—somewhat expurgated for these pages—goes: "Life is one thing after another." And so is work.

# "For to Admire"

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Cotrelly's First Capture," "The Honest Lace Merchant," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

COTRELLY had felt that the size of his latest bonus from a grateful government justified a little extravagance, and he had, moreover, a youthful pride in showing Huldah Mortimer that he still knew how things should be done. Nothing had been lacking in the little dinner, or in the opera that followed it, or in the little supper that followed the opera, that could help to reveal him in his glory as a young man who knew how to entertain the fair.

A wonderful bunch of orchids had preceded him to Mrs. Mortimer's charmingly remodeled little house on Eleventh Street; the taxi that had borne them to the Ritz had been almost of private smoothness and softly upholstered elegance; the dinner had been chosen with a care that Mark had successfully concealed beneath an air of accustomedness; the seats at the Metropolitan had been on the aisle and at exactly that nearness to the stage that Huldah professed to like; and the "bite" afterward had been selected—both as to its content and its place—with a most fastidious skill.

Mark chuckled inwardly, mocking himself for the childish pleasure he took in the vanities of the world; mocking himself for the delighted sense of contrast of this with his ordinary festivities; mocking himself, perhaps most of all, with the knowledge that he was "showing off" before the girl who had once preferred to make sure of all these luxurious trifles rather than of love.

They drove down the avenue toward Eleventh Street in the bright, electrically lighted quiet of midnight. Huldah was silent—reflecting, Mark hoped, upon the mistake she had once made. Then he wondered if she had made a mistake. Were they not basically dissimilar, uncongenial? Could she ever have enjoyed the sort of evening that was more normal to his tastes and his means—the dinner, perhaps, at the cheap, dairy restaurant; the opera heard from the top gallery; the sandwich and the glass of beer in the modest chophouse afterward—or perhaps even at his own modest fireplace; the deserted, breezy sidewalk instead of the padded comfort of the motor car?

And while he mused on the question, and wondered whether, after all, he would care for her companionship in those other circumstances, whether his enjoyment of her to-night was not merely the enjoyment of the unaccustomed luxury, he was conscious that she was speaking to him in a gentle, subdued voice, not like her customary slangy, sweet, indifferent manner. Why didn't he give it up—she wanted to know—this stupid inspectorship? He had made quite a lot, had he not, on fees earned by uncovering smugglers and their plots? Why did he not hand his emoluments over to the money-multiplying hands of Aunt Grace's husband for investment, and find for himself some—er—less unusual pursuit?

"You don't understand how interesting a job it is, Huldah," he replied.

"Interesting fiddle!" said Huldah,

with a more natural emphasis than she had used during her former speech. "Interesting to be a spy! For that's what it is, isn't it? Interesting to pull ladies' trunks to pieces—to hound nice, poor, little men like the Kelekians! Interesting to occupy yourself in a way that really shuts you out from a good—er—settlement in life—" The rich young widow sighed.

"If I were a hanger-on in a broker's office at half the salary, I'd be more eligible to aspire to a lady's hand—is that what you mean?" inquired Mark, suddenly heated. "Well, I prefer my own job!"

"Now you're angry! What a pity—after we have had such a sweet evening!" fluted Huldah sadly.

The taxi drew up smoothly before the quiet house in the old-fashioned street.

"We haven't time to quarrel over it, have we?" said Mark, as he got out and held a hand to assist her. "I'll walk the rest of the way," he said to the chauffeur, reading the meter, paying, and dismissing him.

"No, but you may come soon, if you will, and we'll quarrel comfortably at our leisure. Some afternoon for tea. Oh, I forgot! I suppose you never have tea-time free! Well, some evening—any time!"

"Although I am a spy?"

"Although you are a spy."

She gave him her keys as he crossed the sidewalk with her and stepped down into the space before her house. Huldah had had the former high stone steps removed, and the former basement raised almost to the street level; and the two doors—that to the main hall and that to the servants' and tradesmen's hall—opened side by side into the shallow area. There were some laurel and box trees in tubs in the slight stone depression, and a row of these was the only line of demarcation between the main entrance and the serv-

ants'. Behind the yellow silk curtains of the glass half of the hall door, the lights shone pleasantly. There was the slight pungency of box on the mild March air.

Mark thrust the key Huldah had given him into its lock, turned it, and the mellow hall light shone full upon the stone entrance. Huldah, looking at Mark, extended her hand with her frankest, most comradely gesture, and was saying lightly: "You will come and quarrel, then? Promise!" when suddenly the expression in his eyes stilled her. She followed the direction of his gaze. He was looking across her shoulder, toward the laurel tree just beside the servants' hall door.

"What is it?" she whispered, cold with a sudden fear.

"Go inside!" said Mark, never moving his eyes from the tree.

He put his hand on her shoulder, and pushed her gently toward the door. But Huldah had not always been a carefully guarded young person to whom knowledge at firsthand was denied.

"What is it?" she said again, this time in a full voice. And she pulled herself free of his guiding fingers, whirled about, and there, behind her, fallen across the tubbed plant, she saw the huddled figure of a man. She shrank a little. Then she recovered herself.

"Drunk?" she asked Mark.

"I suppose so," answered Mark, as he released her shoulder and stepped closer to the green bush. He touched the inert body.

"No," he said, looking up at Huldah. "Not drunk—at least, I think not. Go inside and telephone for the police. He's—hurt."

There was a small telephone booth just beneath the stairway inside Huldah's warm, comfortable hall. She stepped quickly toward it. Mark, on guard outside, heard her crisp, sweet





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voice summoning the police from the precinct station. Then he heard her call the nearest hospital—St. Vincent's.

"What a level-headed, unhysterical little creature she is!" he thought, with a sort of pride, forgetting that it was to her very level-headedness he owed the fact that he was still a bachelor, and she the fact of the comfortable, pretty, Eleventh Street house! Then he bent again over the unconscious body lying across the laurel tree. He did not wish to disturb it before the police came; he felt that it was a case for them. But

stooping to make sure that there was nothing he could do to succor the man, he felt a sticky moisture on the garments that he touched.

"Shot!" he cried to himself, in surprise.

He bent lower. There was a queer, penetrating, pungent odor about the garments. He raised the limp head gently.

"And only a boy!" he cried again.

For it was the white face of a beardless youth, not above twenty, upon which the light streamed through the

with a more natural emphasis than she had used during her former speech. "Interesting to be a spy! For that's what it is, isn't it? Interesting to pull ladies' trunks to pieces—to hound nice, poor, little men like the Kelekians! Interesting to occupy yourself in a way that really shuts you out from a good—er—settlement in life—" The rich young widow sighed.

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For it was the white face of a beardless youth, not above twenty, upon which the light streamed through the

still open door. And then, as Huldah returned, asking nervously: "Why don't they come? Why don't they come?" there was the clang of an ambulance bell from one side, and the steady patter of the trained feet of a runner from the other. The policeman and the hospital authorities arrived together.

When law had permitted the removal of the boy's body to the hallway, medicine pronounced him quite dead. He had been shot very neatly through the right lung. There was no sign of any weapon near at hand.

"Who is he?" they asked Huldah, the mistress of the establishment.

"I don't know. I never saw him before," answered Mrs. Mortimer.

"He was probably shot somewhere else, and staggered to Mrs. Mortimer's door for aid," theorized Mark, still sniffing at the queer, intangible odor that exhaled from the dead man's clothing.

"There'd be a trail of blood if that were so." The policeman, flashing an electric lantern on the concrete blocks of the areaway, destroyed that hypothesis at a glance. "No; he was shot right here. Maybe he was visiting one of your servants, ma'am. He don't look like a gentleman."

"Ah, but such a dear boy!" cried Mrs. Mortimer, looking tearfully down upon the white young face, its features composed beneath the strawlike thatch of hair. "But I'll ring for my servants and learn."

She rang imperatively. The butler, Tomson, sleepy-eyed, appeared on the stairs with apologetic reminders that Mrs. Mortimer had given orders that no one should wait up for her.

"Wake everybody!" commanded Huldah briefly. "See if any one has had a visitor to-night."

"Vicky had a visitor to-night, madame," said Tomson. "A young man. My goodness, what's that!" He had

caught sight of the body on the hall floor.

"It's a man who was found dead at my door," said Huldah again, in her brisk, brief manner. "Call Vicky."

Victoria, Huldah's middle-aged cook, came in answer to the summons, a mirth-provoking figure of outraged respectability in her dark flannelette wrapper, her nightcap, her face of protest and slumberousness. But when Huldah had spoken, and when she had looked, with shrinking, at the still figure on the floor, she gave a cry, and sleep and protest were alike banished from her countenance.

"It's him, it's him!" she cried incoherently. "It's him— Oh, Mrs. Mortimer, how come he so?"

"I don't know," replied Huldah, "That's what we want to learn. Who is he—a relative of yours?"

"No'm, not a relative, but as near an' dear as one, so you might say. His mother's cottage was side by side with mine in the village of Witching Water, where we was both born. I tended her when she was brought to bed of this boy here—her first. Eddie was his name— Eddie Sibley. It was before my husband died—"

"Did he come to see you to-night?" demanded the officer, interrupting the cook's lugubrious story.

"Yes, sir, he did. He always come to see me when he was ashore—"

"Oh! Then he was a seaman?"

"Yes, sir. Always running away to see the world, from the time he could toddle. But yet the poor young lad was the good young lad—the boy that was so good to his mother! Why, only to-night he told me he'd taken out a life-insurance policy for a thousand dollars for her—an' him lyin' welterin' in 'is— Oh, it's too aw—"

"What time did he come to see you?" interrupted Policeman Hepburn impatiently.

"It might have been about eight o'clock, sir."

"What time did he leave?"

"It might have been about ten, sir. I made him a cup of tea, sir—Mrs. Mortimer always permits it——"

"Yes, yes," said Huldah, irritated at the self-imposed obstacles to Mrs. Victoria Dowson's narrative.

"So I set him out a bite and a cup. He stayed a while, telling me of his mother, and of Witching Water—he'd been home once during the winter, an' he'd brought his young brother out with him. An' he was talking of one thing an' another. It might have been half past ten when he went. I'll not deceive you—it was half past ten!"

"How long has he been dead, doctor?" Mark Cotrelly asked the young physician from St. Vincent's.

"Between three and four hours," replied the young man. The little group looked toward a grandfather's clock musically ticking away the hours of life and death at the foot of Huldah's stairs. "One o'clock now—he must have been shot as he left the place," the young man finished. "Better send for the coroner, Hepburn?"

The coroner was sent for. Victoria and her lamentations, Tomson and his respectable surprise, the other servants roused by the disturbance and peering curiously over the stair rails, all melted away. Huldah, a little pale from the horror brought to her own door, had bidden Mark good night, and had left her lower hall in the possession of the law. And Mark, after waiting to hear the coroner's office give permission for the removal of the body, and to see the hall cleared, went out into the silent, empty street, and crossed toward his own rooms on Seventh Avenue.

"Poor chap! I wonder who his enemy was," he speculated, as he went. "And what was that peculiar smell about his clothes? Wonder if they'll ever catch the man who did it. Won-

der why any one did it—he sounds like a good fellow, from that old cook's story. Well, we may know more about it all in the morning."

The ways of publicity being quite beyond the comprehension of the lay mind, Mark was astonished to be rung up on the telephone before he had got to bed by divers members of the press, who wanted his version of the "mystery," as they called the discovery of the dead body. Had it been found in a tenement hallway, the interest would have been slighter, perhaps. Had the body been found by a shawled woman, coming in from a search through the neighboring houses of good cheer for her husband, or through the streets for her children, the "story" would not have appealed with such force to the great organs of thought in the metropolis. But, as it was—as the body of the boy had been found in the areaway of a house that might, by due exercise of journalistic imagination, be described as fashionable; as a young widow, rich certainly, and pretty in the estimation of some persons, and therefore fit candidate for the journalistic bestowal of the coveted degree of M. S. S.—Member of the Smart Set—had been coming home from the opera, the tragedy struck them as worthy of much space.

Mark's somewhat humble employment was a stumblingblock in their way. If it had been Percy van Alstyne, the "well-known clubman," who had been Mrs. Mortimer's escort, the story would have gained enormously. But the newspapers, habituated to doing their utmost with slight material, were diligently making the best of the situation, despite all its discrepancies from the ideal of newspaperdom. Could Mark tell them, the representatives of the molders of public opinion wanted to know over the telephone, whether the beautiful widow, Mrs. Mortimer, had ever been annoyed by the admiration of the young sailor?

"Good Lord!" exploded Mark into the receiver. "Good Lord! She never saw the boy in his life! He was calling on her cook!"

"On her cook? Was he—er—engaged to the cook?"

"You can't twist a romance out of this, my friend," answered Mark. "The cook is well over fifty, I should say. And she was present at the poor young fellow's introduction to this world. She was merely a neighbor of his mother's in England twenty years ago!"

"Then there was no romantic story—as far as you know—to account for the murder happening at the rich young Mrs. Mortimer's doorstep?" The dejected voice at the other end of the wire fairly pleaded for help in the construction of a "romance."

"Not a damned particle of romantic story," answered Mark, and hung up the receiver, half amused, half disgusted—only to be called again within a few minutes by a rival elaborator of news, and to have the same questions asked, together with others as to what opera he and Mrs. Mortimer had heard, and where they had supped.

He was not astonished in the morning to find that he and Huldah were conspicuously featured in two of the morning prints. And he was not wholly surprised, as the day wore on, to be approached by numerous interviewers; he was also summoned to appear as a witness before the coroner's court.

The inquest was held after a day or two. Mark and Huldah met for the first time there since the night of the discovery. They confided to each other how great had been their charm for the press in the interim. Poor old Victoria, red-eyed and very important, was present. So were Policeman Hepburn and the young interne from St. Vincent's. And so also was a boy of eighteen, whose sad, bewildered, living face so resembled that of the boy they had found dead the other night that

both Mark and Huldah gasped at the likeness.

Until this boy was called, the testimony was rather perfunctory. Policeman Hepburn testified that he had been sent from the precinct station in response to a telephone call entered upon the blotter in such and such a fashion; and that upon arrival at the given address, he had found such and such things to be so. Young Doctor Ladeslaw told how, being on ambulance duty that night, he had gone from the hospital in response to a telephone summons from number blank West Eleventh Street, and how he had there found such and such a group clustered about the body of a man whom, on investigation, he discovered to be dead of a bullet wound through the right lung. How long had the man been dead? He should reckon about three hours.

Mark and Huldah were then called up to recite their version of the finding of the dead body. And then Victoria, once of Witching Water, was summoned to the witness stand. She stated the facts that she had already stated to the little crowd that had been assembled in Mrs. Mortimer's hall on the night of the tragedy: that the boy—Eddie Sibley—had come to see her on the given evening; that he had described to her his recent visit to Witching Water, where she and his mother had been friends and neighbors for many years; that he had told her of the taking out of a life-insurance policy only a few days previously for the benefit of his mother; that he had told her also of bringing his younger brother, Alfred, out to America in the winter, and of Alfred's success as a carpenter. She told of the dish of tea she had brewed, and of the fruit cake she had set forth. It was a very simple little story as she related it.

"Did he speak as if he were in fear of any enemy?" asked the coroner.

"He didn't speak as if he were afraid





"Confine yourself to the questions, if you please, madam. Where is this friend of his, this son William?"

of anything," replied Victoria, with conviction. "Why should he be? A nice-mannered boy, and doing so well! And such a comfort to his mother!"

Did she know anything of his haunts and his intimates? She knew only two of his intimates—his brother, the young carpenter lad, and her own son, William. It was William as was his most intimate friend, and a terrible blow this was going to be to William.

The coroner cruelly interrupted her. "Confine yourself to the questions, if

you please, madam. Where is this friend of his, this son William?"

William, Mrs. Victoria stated with dignity, was on a voyage. He, too, like poor Eddie Sibley, was a seaman. He had signed with the *Creamador*, which had left on her voyage to Panama the very morning of the day Eddie was shot. He therefore ought to be in tropical seas now, though, in the case of a seaman, no one could tell nothing about where he was! It was a life to wring a mother's heart.

The coroner thumped the table warningly. "The question, the question, if you please, madam! Then your son, William, is not here now?"

"No, sir," answered Mrs. Victoria, showing her displeasure at the manner in which her freedom of speech had been curtailed by speaking almost inaudibly through compressed lips.

"That'll do!" said the coroner curtly, and he called the boy, Alfred, to the stand.

He came shrinkingly. His face was very white, his blue eyes distended with a sort of fright. He was a tall lad, who held himself with a sickly, almost tubercular stoop. His short upper lip parted from his lower one in a fashion that might have been charming in a young girl of shy and shrinking ways, but was a little pitiable in the tall boy.

Where had he been on the night of the murder, the coroner asked him. He blushed. He had been at the moving pictures, he said, out at a resort near Fort George. Had he seen his brother that day or evening? Yes, he had eaten dinner with his brother at his boarding house at six o'clock. Had his brother told him of his evening's program? His brother had not mentioned that he was going to see their old friend—no. Had he said what he was going to do? Alfred Sibley squirmed.

"Well, sir, he spoke some of some things he was goin' to do—I don't rightly know what they was. He was put out with me because I wouldn't do some errands for him, and he said he'd have to do them himself. That's all he said about what he was plannin'."

"So you had a quarrel?" snapped the coroner.

"Oh, no, sir; not what you could call a quarrel," protested the youngster, paling. Then he added, more vehemently: "Oh, no! Not a quarrel!"

The coroner looked at him sharply. "Have you any witnesses who will

corroborate your testimony as to where you spent the evening?"

Alfred blinked uncertainly at the unfamiliar phraseology. "You mean who'll tell you I was at the movies?" he translated the official speech.

"Yes."

"Yes, sir. The—the young lady I took—she would tell you it is so."

"Oh, so you took a young lady?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was she a friend of your brother's?"

"He knew her, sir."

"Is she in court?"

Alfred Sibley looked around the room, with its sprinkling of all sorts of people. His eyes rested on a fresh-colored, buxom young girl seated well forward among the spectators, and his face lightened.

"Yes, sir, she's here," he said comfortably.

"And you don't know of any enemies your brother may have had?" The coroner suddenly changed his tack.

"No, sir."

"And you haven't yet stated what the errands were that he wished you to do for him and that you refused to undertake, thereby incurring his anger. What were they?"

"They were some addresses he wanted me to go to, to deliver some packages for him. I didn't want to go because I was going to take my friend to the movies."

"What were the addresses?"

"I don't remember," sighed the sorely badgered Alfred. "I didn't pay much attention. I didn't want to go—I wasn't going—and so I didn't pay much attention."

"You don't remember any of them?"

"No, sir," stated Alfred, with a sudden, obstinate closing of the tremulous, short upper lip.

"What did he want you to take to them?" persisted the coroner.

"I don't know."

"He didn't tell you what he wanted taken?"

"No, sir."

"You had no idea what he wanted you to take to those addresses?"

"No, sir. I didn't mean to take them, and so I didn't ask him what they were."

"Have you ever done errands for him before?"

"Sometimes."

"Since you have been in this country?"

"Yes, sir, now and then."

"What sort of errands?"

"Oh, carrying things for him to places where he wanted them taken."

"What sort of things?"

"I don't know." Alfred's voice and manner were growing sullen.

"You don't know! You carried packages for your brother without knowing their contents?"

"Yes, sir," said Alfred firmly.

"Where did you take them?"

"I forget." Then, at the look of scorn that the coroner visited upon him, the boy added resentfully: "I haven't been here but three months, and I don't remember the names of places or of people where I have been only once. I can't be expected to."

"So you delivered no packages for your brother that night?" The coroner switched back to the main issue. And again the boy wearily denied that he had done any errands for his brother on the fateful night.

"That'll do—for the present!" snapped the coroner.

And the boy stumbled down from the witness stand and staggered toward a bench, obviously overdone by his long ordeal. Mark, following his movements with sympathetic eyes, looked past him down into the body of the courtroom, where sat the indifferent spectators. Among them he saw a Chinaman—a dingy little figure in his drab trousers and blue blouse. He was

sitting with his hands thrust into the loose sleeves of his jacket, and he was watching the proceedings with non-committal face.

"What's he doing here?" Mark asked a court officer lounging near by.

"The chink? Oh, there's a tong-war killing to come up after this. I guess he got here too early for it."

Mark nodded. Some other witnesses were called—neighbors from the houses on either side of Huldah, who said that they had heard no shot during the evening, but who confessed that in these days of puncturing tires a shot would not attract their attention as it would have done once upon a time.

Then the buxom girl was forced to tell that she, Hetty Mowbry, had been young Alfred's companion at the movies on the evening under consideration, and that Alfred had taken her home to the Bronx, reaching there after midnight. Then once more the badgered Alfred was called to the stand, and was asked if he knew how much money Eddie had had on his person when he left the boarding house that evening.

"I don't know how much—a good deal, I suppose. He had just come off the *Mateador*, and he had all his wages about him, I suppose."

"The *Mateador* docked on the day on which he was killed?"

"Yes, sir."

"There were thirty dollars found on the body. If robbery had been the motive of the attack, the murderer would hardly have left thirty dollars upon the body of the victim," the coroner reasoned aloud. "You don't know how much your brother was carrying?"

Again Alfred said that he did not.

"Did you know of this insurance policy which your old friend testifies your brother claimed to have taken out recently for the benefit of your mother?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your brother must have been doing



*From the shawl folded tightly about her shoulders, from the wrapper flapping about her feet, from her hair, came a strongly acrid, pungent smell. Mark breathed it deeply.*

well—making money—to be able to save so large a share of his wages as is implied by a life-insurance policy?"

"Yes, sir; Eddie made good wages," answered Alfred lifelessly.

And then the inquest adjourned, the

sapient jury finding that Edward Sibley had been done to his death by a bullet wound inflicted by a person unknown. The young assistant district attorney, who had been present at the proceedings, and who had hoped to find in them grounds for an indictment and for a desirable importance, shook his head ruefully at Mark, whom he met in the corridor outside.

"A fizzle," he commented, loitering near Huldah. "But I shan't let it rest at this. There's something more in this than meets the eye."

"Obviously," agreed Mark. Then he gave a sudden turn of his head. The grave, drab Chinaman was leaving the trial room along with Mrs. Victoria, with Tomson, and the rest.

"Why, I thought that fellow was here for a trial of rival tongs, or something of that sort!" he ejaculated. "Did he come just for this hearing?"

The Chinaman drew closer. Mark detached himself from Huldah, with a word of apology. He approached the Celestial.

"Beg pardon," he said, "but aren't you going away too early? Aren't you here for the Lee Hung against the Sing Lung case?"

The Chinaman looked at him with utter blankness.

"Me no Inglis," he finally stated, and passed on out of the corridor.

"No English! And he sits through a hearing like that one!" exclaimed Mark derisively. Then he sniffed the air. There passed, with the Chinaman, a

faintly pungent odor. Mark raised his head as a deer scenting a woodland enemy might lift his. "The same!" he muttered. "The same, or I'll eat my hat!"

He dashed to Huldah to make a brief apology and a brief farewell.

"Something important—awfully sorry. Farley'll see you to your motor—got to rush!"

And he was out of the hall in three leaps.

An elevator was about to descend with its load, and in it he caught a glimpse of a blue blouse of dull Chinese brocaded stuff. He dashed down by the stairway, hoping to reach the main corridor before the crowded lift. But when he was opposite the street entrance of the building, the passengers from the elevator were already melting through the door. He ran to it; down the street, a quarter of a block away, there moved, with impressive lack of hurry, the blue-bloused Celestial. But Mark, following briskly, lost him at the corner. And he was left with only that intangible odor to connect the grave Chinaman with the English boy he had found lying dead across a tub of laurel the other night.

He turned ruefully back to catch Huldah at her car, and to bid her farewell again. But by the time he reached the curb where her limousine waited, Farley had closed the door deferentially upon her, and the chauffeur was tooting a warning horn toward a crowd of boys in front of the machine.

"You blithering jackass!" said Mark vulgarly to himself. "What do you think you are—a central-office sleuth, an assistant of that jackanapes, Farley, or what? What business is it of yours to try to ferret out the crime of murder? Your prey is the smuggler!"

Nevertheless, the interest he had in the first murder that had ever taken on a personal meaning for him persisted. And the faint, pungent smell that had

exhaled from the clothes of the murdered boy and from those of the Chinaman, so unaccountably present in the courtroom whose proceedings he pretended to be unable to understand, was constantly in his nostrils. He went down into Chinatown to determine what it was; it seemed, to his recollection of it, something peculiarly Oriental. But though he bent over sandalwood fans and fingered carved beads and lighted joss sticks, he did not get again the faint whiff that he recollected.

He was coming disconsolately out of the narrow, winding streets, with their gaudy shops, their lanterns, and their shuffling, sibilant crowds, when, at the entrance to Mott Street, he met an associate. They paused to talk, and a woman of the region passed them, dragging heavy feet. From the shawl folded tightly about her shoulders, from the wrapper flapping about her feet, from her hair, came a strongly acrid, pungent smell. Mark breathed it deeply.

"What is that, Pewick?" he asked. "That smell? This is the third time I've caught it, but never before so strongly."

"It's dope," replied Pewick, the experienced, briefly.

"You mean opium?"

"I sure do. And I wish I knew where the poor sister had been hitting the pipe."

"What's it your business? Or are you out for the general uplift of humanity?" inquired Mark.

"Say, have you been asleep for the past few years?" inquired Pewick incredulously. "Do you happen to know how long it is since the importation of opium, except for medical use, has been absolutely prohibited?"

"Good Lord! I am a duffer—I am an imbecile!" Mark made his confession with a groan. "I have never run up against opium, and I forgot all about it. Are they getting much?"

"Getting much? Enough to ruin

the entire population of New York—enough to keep the whole city doped if it were get-at-able."

"But where does it mostly come from?"

"A good deal of it seems to be coming from Colon," replied Pewick. "There seems to be a very neatly linked chain—and I'd give something pretty to be able to get hold of either one end or the other of it."

"Colon—Panama!" Mark's ejaculation caused Pewick to stare at him.

"Your geography seems to be O. K.," he observed. "But why this excitement?"

"Because," answered Mark, "I now begin to perceive something. Have you read about the young English seaman who was found dead at a Mrs.——"

"Mortimer's doorstep, by her and a handsome and captivating young customs inspector when they came down from the opera?" Pewick took up the tale. "I have. Indeed, I've read very little else for the past few days. Why?"

"There was that smell about his clothes," answered Mark, indifferent to the jocularity. "And he had just come off the *Mateador*, which touched at Colon on her last cruise. And there was a Chinaman at the inquest who claimed to understand no English, but who also exhaled that same acrid smell from his clothes."

Pewick whistled. "It sounds as if there might be something in it," he admitted. "But the afternoon papers are all intimating that the fellow was probably murdered by his brother on account of some girl——"

"The brother was in the Bronx when the murder was committed," Mark assailed the theory.

"The brother says he was in the Bronx' and so does the girl, but was he?" corrected Pewick.

"It's nonsense!" asserted Mark vehemently. "That boy never killed a

fly! He's so gentle that he's almost incompetent."

"Anyway, Farley is going to try to hold him for trial," announced Pewick. "Or so the papers say."

But the later editions of the papers said that when the district attorney's office decided to act in the matter of the Sibley murder by the arrest of the younger brother, it found the younger brother's place of abode empty of him. He had disappeared. And the rosy-cheeked girl of the Bronx declared, with a convincing sadness, that she did not know his whereabouts!

"Flight is equivalent to confession. We'll find him yet!" declared Farley, snapping his determined jaws.

But days passed, and the young assistant district attorney's vaunt was unfulfilled. They shadowed the rosy girl of the Bronx, but their shadowing was futile. They lingered around Alfred Sibley's former lodgings, but Alfred did not slip up the broken stone steps in the shadowy twilight, or down them in the grayness of the dawn, like an uneasy ghost. His disappearance seemed to be a bona-fide one, and from this Farley argued the more vehemently as to his guilt, and Mark as to his timidity.

And then, one day in due course, the *Creamador* sailed back into port with its crowd of Southern tourists on deck, and its crowd of able seamen in their quarters, and William, the son of Victoria, the cook, was among them.

William was interviewed; what did he know of Eddie Sibley's haunts and companions and enemies? He knew nothing of Eddie Sibley's enemies. He swore, almost blubbing, that he had not supposed Eddie had an enemy in the world! And he swore, further, that he was here to discover the murderer, and to deal out condign punishment to him. He was all that Eddie's own brother had not been, fierce and vindictive and affectionate.





"John," he said amiably, "can I hit the pipe here?" John looked at him blankly. "Me no spik Inglis," he replied.

"We was always chums," declared William, rubbing his eyes with great, rough hands. "Always. We ran away from 'ome together the first time; 'e was always a great one for wanting to see the world. There was a pome 'e was always sayin' of—'e was a bookish lad sometimes—about:

"For to admire an' for to see,  
For to be'old this world so wide—  
It never done no good to me.  
But I can't drop it if I tied.

"Pore Eddie! 'E's dropped it now!

But I'll do what that white-livered kid brother of 'is didn't do—I'll find out who did for my old chum!"

Mark, who had continued to concern himself about the curious case of Eddie Sibley, was present in the district attorney's office when William spake thus with manly feeling.

"He's a liar!" said Mark to himself, with conviction.

Mark had a native distrust of eloquence. William was far too eloquent to be genuine, he thought. And he hung

around until the district attorney had thanked the seaman from the *Creamador*, and had told him that he might go. And then Mark was moved, he scarcely knew why, to keep the affectionate young man in sight for a while.

He dodged agilely between carts and cars and drays, and he made, as befitted a man of the sea, toward the water front. Once on West Street, he swung aboard a Belt Line car. Mark also swung aboard, but stayed discreetly on the back platform, while William went inside and sat down. By and by, at the Hoboken ferry, William, looking suspiciously around, got off and went aboard the ferryboat. Mark still followed.

Once in the city of steamship landings, William did not, as might have been natural, seek the waterside. His errand seemed to deal with something else than signing for a fresh voyage to a new part of the world. He went back from the salty, mast-pierced area along the river, into the quiet, old German part of the city. And by and by he paused before a laundryman's door. He looked back over his shoulder before he entered. But there was no one in sight except a leisurely ununiformed citizen and two little girls on roller skates. He dived into the doorway of the laundry.

"Curious how far from home he has his collars done up!" reflected Mark.

And he was scarcely surprised when William, the son of Victoria, came out without a bundle, yet wearing a well-pleased expression, quite unlike that of a man who has just been disappointed in the matter of clean clothes.

Mark looked in through the laundry window. A drowsy-seeming Chinaman stood behind the counter. To the young man, he bore a resemblance to the Chinaman of the coroner's court; but then, as Mark realized, so would any Chinaman; he could not differentiate among them. He went up the street

and telephoned the customs department. Then he went into the laundry. A strong, acrid smell saluted his nostrils. "John," he said amiably, "can I hit the pipe here?"

John looked at him blankly. "Me no spik Inglis," he replied.

But when Mark's reinforcements arrived, John spoke quite fluent English for a few minutes; it was chiefly profane. That was natural in the circumstances, for Mark and the reinforcements were very active in breaking their way into a rear room, where half a dozen Orientals drowsed happily away with their opium pipes. And they were active, also, in looking behind the counter, and in discovering and confiscating many innocent-looking little litchi nuts which were filled with the sticky, black, bitter paste that would give surcease of sorrow for a while to any one purchasing it, and understanding its use.

They confiscated, also, several new packages, about the size of sardine boxes, which had not yet been removed from the wrappings in which they had been carried upon the person of William, once of Witching Water. Of course, it did not immediately develop that the new, unbroken packages had been delivered by William that day. That information came later, when William was languishing in jail, awaiting trial for the importation into the United States of America of a contraband article.

When the news of the important capture in the opium-smuggling business was made public through the papers, young Alfred Sibley reappeared upon the scene. He explained that he had sailed away seeking William at Panama—William, whom he believed to have instigated his brother's murder.

But William, they pointed out to him, had not been in New York on the night when the murder was committed. Alfred admitted the fact.

"But his gang was here," he said.

"And why should his gang have it in for your brother, who was the friend of William?"

"William was no friend of Eddie's," explained Alfred wearily.

And then, word by word, dragging syllable by dragging syllable, they got the story from him. Eddie, too, had learned the profits that there were in smuggling opium from Colon into New York. Eddie had made the discovery first as an agent of William's, when that busy importer had caught a fever and had been laid up in a Panama hospital at the time his ship was due to return to New York.

William had trusted Eddie to carry back the stuff and to deliver it to William's customers in Hoboken and Jersey City and Newark. And Eddie realizing the enormous profits that his friend was making, had set out thriftily to undersell him. He had done it quite without prickle of conscience or of loyalty. Why should he be a poorly commissioned partner of William's, he had argued, when he could, quite as easily, quite as safely, be a merchant of forbidden wares on his own account? William was grasping, anyway, in his demands upon the poor Chinamen! He, Eddie, would be their benefactor by selling them the little smuggled tins at a smaller margin of profit than that at which William sold them!

That had been Eddie's perfectly businesslike scheme. And he had sought to initiate Alfred into it. He had succeeded in inducing the younger boy to

be his emissary once to the various Chinese customers whom he had stolen from William. But Alfred had experienced a change of heart before the second time. That second load Eddie had grumblingly delivered himself, and the third lot Alfred had again refused to handle.

Why, they asked him, had he been so scrupulous? It was a psychological interest they had in the matter. He hung his blond head; his vague eyes filled with tears. There was, he said, a girl—in the Bronx—and she—she—well, she had had a sister who had gone to destruction by the opium road. The girl had begged him not to do what his brother wanted, and so he had not done it. That was all.

Then he gave the district attorney's office the names of William's other allies in the trade in which he was engaged. And there was one among them who had difficulty in accounting for his whereabouts on the March night when Mark Cotrelly had taken Huldah Mortimer home from the opera and had found the dead body at the door. And so, little by little, the noose was fitted to his neck—and the prison gates opened wide for William, the captain of industry. And so, of the English boys from Witching Water who had set out "for to admire and for to see," only one remained with eyes still open to the light of day. And for him, the light of day was centered in the look of the rosy girl of the Bronx who had kept him from the ruin that had involved his comrades.





# THE POETICAL SOUL of DODD

By

EDWARD BOLTWOOD

Author of "Confessors," "A Hit in the Ninth," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

MRS. BANNON, having collected the rent, turned on the threshold of Dodd's bedroom and again glanced apprehensively at his round, innocent face.

"What's struck you to-night, all of a sudden, professor?" inquired the landlady. "Seein' ghosts, or anythin'?"

"Ain't seen any yet," replied Dodd, in an unsteady voice.

"Well, 'scuse me for askin', but you look sort o' knocked out," said Mrs. Bannon.

She waddled along the dark hall, reflecting that Dodd had seemed quite normal at dinner, ten minutes ago. Mrs. Bannon sighed; she was fond of the middle-aged professor, and she had observed the downward path of many discouraged men and women in the shabby New York boarding house.

"He's a nice old rube," she said to herself. "I hope he ain't gettin' to be one o' them solitary boozers." And she sadly recalled her experience with another musician, who had been carted from her house to Bellevue.

Dodd, however, was quite sober. He

closed the door behind Mrs. Bannon and hurried to his table beside the open window. A gust of wind had disarranged the sheets of manuscript on the table, and his trembling fingers searched among them eagerly.

The manuscripts, each in a different handwriting, were of short poems. Every sheet bore this rubber-stamped inscription:

Rec'd by the Big Hit Music Co., A. Mercer, Prop.

Mr. Mercer's business, in which Dodd labored, was to supply music for the song words of budding genius, and to publish the composition on a share basis. The share assigned to budding genius by Mr. Mercer was the privilege of making a contribution to Mr. Mercer's bank account, and of making nothing else. Dodd had been employed, as its sole composer, by the Big Hit Music Company for nearly a year. Some weeks he earned as much as twenty dollars, when, in the expressive parlance of Mr. Mercer, the suckers were jumping right.

At length Dodd found the poem that

he had been reading when Mrs. Bannon had knocked on the door. He stared at the verses and drew a long breath, as if he were inhaling perfume. A spatter of rain fell through the window, and Dodd groped for the sash and lowered it, without once shifting his eyes from the manuscript. Then he dropped helplessly into his chair.

The vaudeville team on the floor above began their noisy rehearsal; in the parlor, little Pansy Bannon pounded the piano doggedly, preparing for the morning lesson, which assisted Dodd to pay his board bill; and in the East Side

avenue street traffic whined and rattled and clanged. But Dodd, reading the wonderful poem over and over, heard nothing, was conscious of nothing, except a song melody, which his soul made for him as if of its own accord. Never in his life had Dodd's simple spirit been moved in this marvelous way.

The magical verses were written on blue paper, in a feminine and old-fashioned hand. Even Dodd, an illiterate man, knew that several words were misspelled; that was the case, indeed, with most of the clumsy, hopeless lyrics that came to A. Mercer's net. The name signed was "Martha Smith," with an address at an inland town of Connecticut.

Dodd leaned back in his chair, and faintly hummed the words to the melody invented for him by his soul. He blushed like a young girl, confessing her love aloud for the first time. The dismal room seemed to vanish, and the song transported Dodd to the little sea-



*Dodd groped for the sash and lowered it, without once shifting his eyes from the manuscript.*

coast village of his youth. The roar of the street outside became the crash of the surf against the rocks. The rain on the windowpane was like the whip of spray.

"I wouldn't be ashamed to go back there now," he whispered. "If this song is the real thing."

The suggestion that it was not the real thing shocked him. He closed his eyes, and recited the words of the song almost reverently.

"I won't be ashamed to go back there now," said he. "I won't be ashamed now to take up their offer for my old organ again." He rummaged for a letter in his table drawer. "I shan't go back a failure!" cried Dodd exultantly. "She can write more lyrics, Martha Smith can, and I can set 'em to music in Matucket as good as I can here. She's my mascot. She's found it at last! She's the only one who's ever found my soul!"

The next morning in his flashy office, Mr. Mercer received Dodd's resignation with bitterness. He glared across the street at the gilt sign of a business rival, Sol Mendelberg. It happened that the sign further embittered the proprietor of the Big Hit Music Company, for Mendelberg had recently married Cerise la Motte, a famous vaudeville singer, who was successfully pushing her husband's publications, and as successfully decrying Mercer's and his shady methods.

"Look-a-here, Dodd!" growled Mr. Mercer. "What's eating you? I'm paying you as much as anybody would."

Dodd did not know that this was a lie, and he would not have cared had he known it to be one. He had never been so happy in his life. With his right hand he flung a bundle of manuscripts on Mercer's desk, and with his left he stroked the breast of his antiquated and shiny frock coat. He could hear the crinkling of a certain sheet of

blue paper beneath his left hand, and he smiled blissfully.

"Good-by, Mr. Mercer. Yes, you've paid me well. You've paid me better than you think."

"What do you mean by that, you old fool?" snapped Mercer.

"Oh, nothing!" Dodd said. "Good-by, sir!"

As he walked along Broadway toward the Grand Central, he seemed to be treading on sunbeams. The people on the street turned to grin at the flushed and radiant face under the brim of Dodd's rusty silk hat. The people in the smoking car, which whirled Dodd across the green fields of Connecticut, chuckled at his vacant eyes and constantly moving lips.

"Martha Smith!" the lips were murmuring softly. "Martha Smith! I wonder!" And then he would repeat the Heaven-sent words of the song.

A dozen racking years of failure in New York had ground Dodd almost dry of romance, but now he formed many timid pictures of Martha Smith against the grimy window of the car. A farmer's daughter? He thoughtfully studied the ill-formed writing on the cheap, blue paper. A farmer's wife? Dodd frowned, and shook his head, and restored the sheet to his pocket.

"It wouldn't have hit me this way, if it didn't mean something," he argued half aloud. "It means something, the whole business does, and— What's that you say, sir? No, thank you, I guess I won't play euchre. I get off here."

The card sharper returned to his confederate, with the announcement that the mark across the aisle talked daffy, and that it was a shame to lose him.

Dodd disembarked and directed an excited query at a lounge on the platform of the rural station.

"Fourteen Laurel Terrace?" repeated the native. "Why, say, there's only one place on the whole of Laurel Terrace!



Look-a-yonder! You can see it from right here."

The professor looked. On a neighboring hill were visible the bright awnings of a large and turreted country house. To Dodd the house seemed like a palace. He caught his breath.

"Name—name o' Smith livin' there?" he gasped.

"Not that I knows of," answered the other. "That's the Currier place, that is. He's an actor, they say. But him and his folks are real high-toned."

Dodd tramped up the hill doubtfully. A stone gatepost at the top, however, displayed the street number that was written on the manuscript. He turned into the driveway and climbed the steps of the house.

The entrance door stood ajar, revealing a broad hall. The splendor of tapestry and polished panels abashed Dodd, unaccustomed as he was to such things; he hesitated. A beautifully dressed woman passed across the hall, saw him, and halted.

The luxurious house had abashed Dodd, but the woman stunned him. It was not merely that she was graceful and lovely, but that she spoke and carried herself like a young queen.

"Are you waiting for anybody?" she asked, very haughtily.



*"Are you waiting for anybody?" she asked, very haughtily.*

Dodd managed to pull the sheet of blue paper from his pocket.

"I—I guess I've made a mistake, ma'am," he faltered. "I've come to see—to see Martha Smith."

The woman's violet eyes widened.

"Why, I am Martha Smith!" said she.

The professor was afraid to look at her face, but he was conscious that she made a welcoming gesture with her jeweled hand. He followed her into a drawing-room, and, in obedience to a

second regal gesture, sat down gingerly on a gilt chair.

The woman went straight to an open French window, beyond which Dodd saw the gaudy awning of a piazza. There she half turned and spoke to Dodd—rather loudly, he fancied, although her voice was cordial and pleasant.

"Are you listening carefully now?" she demanded. "You've come from Mercer, haven't you, about that lyric I sent him?"

"I've come about the lyric you sent Mercer," mumbled the professor.

"And what do you think of it?" said Martha Smith.

Dodd blinked at her stupidly. She might as well have asked him to say, offhand, what he thought of the planetary system.

"I—I can't just describe how much I think of it, ma'am. I have never read anything that touches it."

"Would you advise me to print it over my own name?"

"Of course," said Dodd, somewhat perplexed.

Martha Smith smiled, not at Dodd, but at the open window.

"I was afraid Mercer might not believe that it was original," she admitted.

The professor was horrified. Such a



"Did you put it over, Cerise?" "What made you shut the window on us?"

charge against this radiant being who had touched his soul seemed almost irreligious. His indignation untied his tongue.

"No, no, no!" he declared earnestly. "I must tell you, ma'am, why I am sure that you have written a wonderful poem. Mercer ain't seen it. I worked for Mercer, but he ain't seen it. It is too sacred. Nobody has seen it, only me. It came to me—I dunno—like a message. It hit me right in the heart. It made me think—made me hope that the heart that sent it must sort o' understand mine, somehow. I guess them verses are goin' to change my whole life."

His voice broke. The young woman stared at him, and then she did rather an odd thing. She closed the window.

"What do you mean?" said she.

"Oh, I don't expect you'd care, ma'am!"

"Yes," she rejoined. "If I sent you such a message, I ought to care, oughtn't I?"

"It's this way, ma'am," quavered Dodd. "A while ago, I was a church organist in a little village on the coast—a little fishing village. And I was happy, too, but I didn't know it. I thought if I went to New York, I'd be a great musician. So I went. I've been a failure. I've just managed to live, that's all. But I was ashamed to go back."

"I see," said the woman softly.

"I tried writing music," continued the professor. "I couldn't write any. But last night your poem came to me. It stirred up the inside of my soul, seems like. I've shook New York, and I'm on my way home now, if you—if only you—"

"Well?" she encouraged him.

"If only you'll promise to send me other poems, same as this," murmured Dodd. "That's what I want. I want to go back home, feeling sure that you're

writing poems to send me. You'll never find anybody that they'll hit stronger than they will me."

Watching her face wistfully, he was quite unable to interpret its expression. She seemed to be amused and sympathetic at the same moment. Dodd looked down and fingered the band of his shabby hat.

"Why, yes, I'll promise," she agreed. "If you'll promise to leave New York and go back for good to your little village, you shall have all the poems you want from me, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Dodd," supplied the professor. "Erastus Dodd, Matucket."

"I'll remember," said Martha Smith. "If I only knew how to thank you!" Dodd choked.

The woman held out her hand.

"Don't try to thank me," she said. "I don't deserve your thanks, because—well, this has turned out very differently from the way I was mean enough to hope it would when I sent that lyric to Mercer. And I'm glad. Good-by, and good luck."

From the front door of the house, the woman gazed at Dodd's retreating figure, as he shuffled toward the gate.

"Poor boob!" exclaimed the poetess.

She returned to the drawing-room and flung open the French window. A group on the piazza assailed her with inquiries.

"Did you put it over, Cerise?"

"What made you shut the window on us?"

"Did the guy fall for it, Mrs. Mendelberg?"

"Mercer will never hear the last of this, will he, Mrs. Mendelberg? Why, it'll drive him and his skin of a Big Hit Company out of business!"

"Cerise, dearie, Sol ought to give you a necklace for this piece of work!"

Mrs. Mendelberg, who had been Martha Smith in the drawing-room, did not acknowledge the hint. She walked

thoughtfully to the end of the piazza. A vivacious soubrette in a steamer chair addressed her host.

"I guess I'm thick-headed, Mr. Currier, but I'm not wise to the game yet."

"It's like this," responded Currier. "Cerise Mendelberg copied one of Tennyson's best-known poems and sent it in to Mercer, to see if the old faker would take money from her for setting it to music and publishing it. If there's anything doing, it'll be the funniest joke ever."

"Well, there's nothing doing," said Cerise, over her shoulder. "It's all off. And it isn't such a darned funny joke, either. I can see how I'm going to copy a poem of Tennyson's once a week or so for the rest of my born days."

"For gracious sake, why?" cried the astonished soubrette.

"That's my private affair," said Mrs. Mendelberg inscrutably.

Her kindly violet eyes were fixed upon the distant station platform at the foot of the hill, and upon a man there, waiting for the train that was to convey him to Matucket. Mrs. Mendelberg's eyes were able seemingly to penetrate the man's shiny black coat and to read the verses written on a sheet of blue paper in his pocket. At any rate, she could repeat the verses to herself. The first one was:

Break, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.



### A May Thought

COULD you close your eyes and say  
What this month is, as a child  
Reads the riddle when you lay  
Hands upon his eyes, beguiled,  
Saying, in the midst of kisses:  
"Little one, now guess who this is?"

Blindfold, you have still an ear  
Bent to hear the wren's bright trill,  
And the thrush's bolder cheer  
From the apple boughs that spill,  
All the scented day and night,  
Flurrying snows of pink and white.

There's another hint—a whiff  
From the lilac clumps that mask  
Half the arbor; rich as if  
One had crushed a perfume flask.  
Bubble note and fragrant spray—  
Time for life, for love! 'Tis May!

RHEEM DOUGLAS.



ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD THOMAS DENISON

H AVERGILL threw the remaining stick of wood on the fire; he did it with the proud courage of a gentleman playing his last card. When would he enjoy an open fire again? Certainly not till he found another landlady equally gifted with lively faith and an open grate in her third-floor back; and the combination seemed daily to be getting more rare. Suspicion, steam heat, and other ills that the lodger is heir to loomed large, and Havergill, with the philosophy born of such vicissitudes, turned his attention to the last stick, resolved to enjoy the blaze while it lasted.

Mrs. Moffat's note had requested the room by twelve. Accordingly, it began to brighten, as the square of the distance between its shabby familiarity and the possibilities of the street increased. The very inequalities of the chair springs, formerly an object of execration, seemed softened in farewell. A wavering crack in the ceiling took on the noble outline of the Sphinx; why had he not noticed it before? He might have got a couple of sonnets out of it. Dreaming in his chair by the fire, that subtle outline, set in its desert of smoky ceiling, could, through the alchemy of his imag-

ination—and such assistance as he could draw from a brown bottle—borrow the inexorable calm and mystery of old Nile. He regretted the sonnets, as he had many another lost opportunity.

Presently he sat up with a start. A name in a morning paper over which he had been dawdling had caught his eye and held it like the flight of a comet. The paragraph read:

Mr. John Fitzhugh Wayne, of Paris, the eminent sculptor, is the guest of General Horatio Parkinson at the Devon.

Havergill's expression changed; it had the crude joy of a man who has just been told that his lottery ticket has taken the prize.

"Fizzy! Good old Fizzy in New York, and stoppin' with the family war horse! Good Lord, is he going to make a bust of him—grope for a man under his military chiffons—or is it Miss Parkinson?"

The enforced exodus was robbed of its sting. Parting from the open fire, from the possible inspiration of the Sphinx sonnets, from a landlady with a medieval faith in poets—the misery of it dwindled before the inspiring fact that he was again in the same town with the friend and studio mate with

whom he had spent the happiest years of his life.

"Fizzy!" The very name recreated Montparnasse and the blithe dinners at the Café Florette with the sanded floor and the two waiters, Marcel and Hippolyte, and Madame Nay, the patronne, intrenched in lofty seclusion behind her counter. He saw himself presiding over those ambrosial nights, the Havergill whom the students imitated and thought the wittiest man on the Rive Gauche. He had charmed them with his mimicry, had warmed them with his humor; he had had, in fact, that positive genius for making other people happy that is so often the birthright of failure.

Wayne had been the antithesis of his brilliant friend; the best trump in the sculptor's hand had been his infinite capacity for taking pains, and it had been enough of a trump for him to win the game. Wayne was "eminent"; the paper had told the truth.

Havergill in his time had played many parts—painter, musician, writer of verse—even university coach when the wolf had thrust its muzzle in at the door. He had flirted with all the muses and been successively jilted by them all. For the past year he had drifted about New York, in that nether stratum of human experience known paradoxically as "on his uppers." But the name of his friend swept away this sordid retrospect, and he continued to repeat: "Fizzy and the war horse!"

The combination struck him as irresistibly humorous, and he set about packing his belongings, humming something about "his unknown uncle, Mars." Packing was the briefest of operations, his effects consisting of the score of a musical comedy, the manuscript of a problem play, a change of underwear, and a thermos bottle; he had no difficulty in accommodating them in a suit case, and he walked from his boarding

house as devoid of a rooftop as a sparrow.

The paper had stated that Mr. John Fitzhugh Wayne was at the Devon, and the Devon, as Havergill recalled it, was in the neighborhood of Washington Square, on lower Fifth Avenue. A rapid mental calculation told him that he was about one hundred and fifteen blocks from the Devon, as the elevated flies, and he was as guiltless of car fare as Adam before his fall. In the neighborhood of Ninety-eighth Street and Broadway was situated an emporium for wet goods, kept by one Gustavius Opp, with whom Havergill sometimes discussed socialism; he decided to intrust the publican with his suit case, and make, if possible, a small loan.

Mr. Opp was hospitable, but not disposed to finance Havergill's friendly expectations. Other experiences with other friends were monotonously similar; many were disposed to treat, but none to trust. So that by the time he reached lower Fifth Avenue, having walked the entire way from Harlem, the Washington Arch seemed to have followed the biblical injunction and to have increased and multiplied since he had last been in the neighborhood.

The clerk at the Devon was not cordial. No, Mr. Wayne was not in, and he held out no hopes of his return. Indeed, he seemed doubtful of the wisdom of intrusting the visitor with one of the pens, bristling impartially from the back of a potato on the desk, that he might write a note. But he did finally, and Havergill saw his note stowed away in a pigeonhole.

Through the long glass doors, Fifth Avenue loomed icy and dun-colored. His constitutional from One Hundred and Fifteenth Street had taken the fine edge off his appetite for walking. Pedestrians, bundled in furs, hurried; even the derelicts of Washington Square had taken to cover. Havergill was wearing a lightweight fall suit and no overcoat.





HAROLD THOMAS DENISON

"Fizzy!" The very name recreated Montparnasse and the blithe dinners at the Café Florette. He saw himself presiding over those ambrosial nights.

In the hall an elevator was plying up and down, receiving and disgorging warmly dressed people. He didn't know why he did it, unless that it was the last desperate alternative to a park bench, but into the elevator he went, shrunk himself into as small a space as possible, and found himself ascending through varying strata of warmth, comfort, and red-carpeted corridors.

"Tenth floor, sir, last stop—last stop, you," amended the elevator boy, on seeing the aspect of his passenger. "What are you doing in this car? The help goes by the freight."

Havergill passed out meekly. He'd thaw out on the top floor for a few minutes; then—he'd go down, by the freight. He walked about the red-carpeted corridor, expecting every moment to be challenged by some one, turned, retraced his steps between two rows of numbered doors, and came to one marked "bathroom."

A hot bath! Every fiber of Havergill's being not utterly frozen rose to the mental suggestion as a soprano to her advertised high "C." Why were people, all the world over, not writing rhapsodies over hot baths? It seemed a subject worthy of the noblest flights of genius. Never had porcelain seemed so white, never had nickel shone with such effulgence. A long, deep, hot, wide, refreshing bath! Monte Cristo exclaiming, "The world is mine!" had not a keener zest in the joy of possession than Havergill turning the key in the lock. The waters of the Croton, while sounding less poetical than those of Lethe, proved quite as effectual in the matter of oblivion; in two minutes Havergill was sleeping in the tub, as peacefully as an infant.

Hotels, like individuals, have personality. The personality of the Devon was creative and industrious, and in spots intellectual; it boasted more authors than any other two hotels in New York put together. Once there was a

fire at the Devon, and the only hair-breadth escapes effected were those of manuscripts. Firemen scaled ladders clutching to their breasts bulky sheaves of typewriting; frantic women, with three-ply names, called hoarsely from high windows to the firemen; not to save their children, but to play the hose on such and such a smoldering heap of manuscript about to be hurled by them into the court.

But this is merely a digression. Suffice it to say that at the Devon all wrote and a few published. All over the hotel the morning hours were devoted to the courtship of the muse; from nearly every room might be heard the sound of a typewriter racing or lagging according to inspiration. In the afternoons, the muse shut down, and authors employed themselves in chores more or less domestic. Gentlemen authors developed photographs—borrowing the washstands in the public bathrooms for the purpose—and lady authors sometimes attended to petty laundry matters, such as doing up a lace-edged handkerchief, or personally launching a pair of silk stockings on their first ablutions; laundresses are notoriously careless in such matters.

This prelude will explain why the continued occupancy of one of the top-floor public baths was noticed by many gifted, with trained powers of observation. Mr. Walter Bittany, having just completed one of his popular series of "Pavement Nature Studies," a volume on "June Bugs of the Bronx and How to Recognize Them Downtown," was anxious to bathe his photographs and see the results. Mary Morewood Howgate, author of those trenchant essays: "Shall Our Daughters Rule Us?"—she was a spinster and entitled to speak with authority—wanted to dip a lace waist in a weak solution of coffee, to give it a "real" look, and the continued fortified policy of the bathroom was distinctly irritating.

A half hour, an hour, and the deadlock continued, and the authors, male and female, as He created them, began to wonder if death, that inevitable end of all things—lace waists, photographs, manuscripts—had not been at work in the top-floor bath? Mr. Bittany reported their fears at the desk—the bathroom had been locked for ages—and that swift, climactic hotel official known as the "bouncer" did the rest. He lowered his head like a bull, drove with his muscular shoulders, there was a bump, followed by a long, splitting crack—and the slumbering form of Mr. Havergill was revealed.

"He's all right, sor!" the bouncer reported to Mr. Bittany, after a prolonged shake, and Mr. Bittany went to tell the ladies, huddled modestly about the stairs, that the fellow was evidently a tramp who wandered in, took a bath, and went to sleep in the tub.

The bouncer, who had not been given his job for any intrinsic qualities of mercy, dispensed with the formalities of a towel. He thrust Havergill, wet and dripping, into his clothes, and maliciously buttoned them awry, with the ease of a nurse handling an infant. It was a masterly performance on the part of the bouncer, and, though Havergill swore at him in four languages and begged to dress himself, the bouncer paid not the slightest attention; his rôle was that of a nurse, grim, implacable. The hostile toilet completed, he was about to escort his victim to the desk when Fate, with her accustomed sense of humor, chose the moment for the arrival of Wayne, General Parkinson, and his daughter.

"Fizzy, ol' boy—— Fizzy!" And the bather fairly leaped at Wayne, almost smothering him in an embrace. "While waitin' for you, took bath, 'lamed plasth!"

The hotel chorus of authors, bouncers, bell boys, ladies and gentlemen who merely boarded, crowded close.

This disreputable-looking tramp proclaimed himself the friend of Mr. Wayne, the "eminent" sculptor, as the paper had stated that very morning! And, instead of Wayne's repudiating him, he was actually holding him by the hand!

The phenomenon appeared to impress General Parkinson much as it had impressed the hotel chorus. He moved away from Wayne and took up a defensive position in the immediate neighborhood of his daughter.

"Do I understand," and the general's militant eye sought Wayne, "that this person is a friend of yours, and that, while awaiting your return, he actually got into a bathtub, and went to sleep?"

But Havergill gave the sculptor no chance to reply. "Fri'n's!" and a magnificent gesture disposed of anything so casual. "Brothers, David 'n Jonathan, or Pyth-thias 'n Knight—no, tha's not right. Who wash the chap that's mentioned with Pythias? Fought, worked, shtarved t'gether. Fizzy's gone to the good now, but Fizzy used to be gay boy——"

The unfortunate Mr. Wayne loudly and volubly interrupted his friend, with demands for the exact date of his arrival, the name of the ship he came in, and other irrelevant details.

Clara Parkinson's eye sought Wayne's. "I understand," it signaled, "but father never will." And the general, as if to verify his daughter's prediction, began to get red above the collar and choky looking about the eyes.

"Clara," said the general, in a thunderous undertone, "Wayne is undoubtedly an eminent sculptor, but it is doubtful if a man of genius makes a good husband. Look at this friend of his. Secretly, I strongly suspect him of being a bohemian."

Wayne knew that Havergill was damaging his prospects with the general beyond repair, but to abandon any-

thing so abject, especially one who had been so much to him in his student days, was impossible to a man of his fundamental loyalty.

"He is an old friend of mine, general. I'll take him to my room and let him sleep it off. I'm sorry it's raised this commotion. He's a good sort."

"Clara, my dear, we will go to our rooms and leave Mr. Wayne—and his friend."

"Fri'nd of yours, sor, did ye say?" grinningly inquired the head bouncer.

"Thin we'll not carry out th' urtherers av the disk, which was to chuck 'um."

"Who did you say he was?" The inquiry flew from mouth to mouth, like some parlor game of question and answer. And the response briskly echoed: "A friend of Mr. Wayne's."

The friend, whose symptoms were succeeding themselves in normal chronological order, had now arrived at that stage of his "case" when memories of the old days in Paris moved him to tears. He twined a damp arm about the sculptor's neck, and assured him that, no matter what others did, he'd never go back on him.

A nature poetess, and a lady whose clothes fitted like a badly made figure eight, but who was understood to be the highest paid "fashion writer" in New York, decided to withdraw. As a break in the day's routine, the episode was practically over, and there was face creaming and nail polishing to be done before dinner.

Their departure left a clearer view of those who made up the back row of the hotel chorus. Lydia Wingfield Barnard—another of the three-ply-name ladies—on whom the literary reputation of the hotel heavily rested, drew back hastily, but not before Haverhill had seen her and shrieked:

"Ghost! Ghost!"

The writer on political economy, sociology, and general reform thus designated wore her habitual pale, clinging draperies. She did not look at all ghostly, only superæsthetic, cling-



AMULET ZIMMERMAN

*There was a bump, followed by a long, splitting crack.*

ing, ethereal—and a lot of other things you would not expect a writer on political economy to look. When the chorus, as it were, turned to look at the lady described as “ghost,” she was no longer there; she had ducked and run with the agility of a schoolboy.

The apparition, however, had been enough to make Havergill decline Wayne's invitation to come to his room and sleep it off. In preference, the icy streets were his immediate decision, and, damp and dripping, he ran for the ten flights of stairs, and started up Fifth Avenue. Wayne followed, and, though he had never needed a fur-lined coat more, he took his off and insisted on Havergill's wearing it.

Havergill still babbled of the ghost, or rather of the astral spirit of a friend, a friend who had projected her beautiful spirit across the ocean to reprove him for his loathsome weakness. Wayne didn't pay very close attention to these occult meanderings, for his mind was busy with schemes for getting the derelict into some shelter where his streaming clothes could dry. A few paces up Fifth Avenue was a semi-French hotel, where a cosmopolitan charity to certain weaknesses of the stronger sex might be expected. Wayne proposed going there, and Havergill, with a noble catholicity of taste in regard to refreshment in any form, agreed.

The sculptor led the way to a pleasantly disordered reading room, full of foreign papers, time-tables, and gentlemen with lamp-black hair, burnt-cork mustaches, and imperials, talking and gesticulating with continental fluency.

To the keen disappointment of his friend, Wayne ordered black coffee. Havergill took it, however, and the effect on him was almost immediate; he had been practically without solid food for forty-eight hours, and the coffee, inky and potent, flowed through his veins like an elixir.

Wayne watched the real man—the whimsical, eccentric genius—struggle to the surface. It was curiously like watching the development of a photograph; gradually the features lost their indeterminate blur, and printed sharp and fine; the lines of the figure straightened. Wayne could fairly see the physical struggle of Havergill to throw the drunkard that wrapped him in a smothering embrace.

“Excuse me, old man, but I must write something—utmost importance.”

Wayne saw him reach for some cable blanks on the table before him and select a pen with care. Almost immediately he began to write; he wrote, erased, tore up, and wrote again. An hour went by; then another.

Wayne thought of many things; their days in Paris, the promise of the man, the lack of something in him—ignoble industry, perhaps—that had kept him from even mediocre accomplishment. He thought of Clara, and wondered how far the present adventure would put back the clock of his hopes. He also reflected that they had had no dinner, but he did not dare interrupt Havergill's literary processes. Whatever they might be, he was quiescent, and his clothes were drying.

Finally Havergill arose, a sheaf of papers in his hand. He was apparently sober; nay more, despite his disheveled hair and wretched, unpressed clothes, he was impressive. It was the old Havergill, who could hold, charm, cajole, amuse, thrill a multitude.

“Wayne, how much money can you let me have? It's a matter of life and death with me. It's my last chance to get on my feet and stay there.”

Wayne had known these “last chances” before, but he was so impressed by the transformation of the man that with greater generosity than prudence he opened his pocketbook and counted out ten dollars.



*The phenomenon appeared to impress General Parkinson. "Do I understand," yours, and that, while awaiting your return, he*

"That's every cent, except just enough for a frugal dinner."

"Thanks, I'll be back in a few minutes," and the sculptor saw him hurry out into the hall and stop at the telegrapher's desk. He returned in about ten minutes, steady, erect, keyed to con-

cert pitch; Havergill's moods, his friend recalled, always scalloped between sub and super. Now it was extra super, and his long, fine fingers twitched restlessly with a desire to be at something. In one of the sitting rooms, he saw a piano, opened it, and played Cho-





*and the general's militant eye sought Wayne, "that this person is a friend of actually got into a bathtub, and went to sleep?"*

pin so wonderfully, so understandingly, that the diners came out to inquire who the pale man was who looked as if he had been fished from the river and hung on a branch to dry.

Wayne waited for him to finish, then took him off to dinner. The derelict

had so long been a stranger to regular meals that the sight of plenty had a cloying effect.

"Do you know what I wanted that money for, the money I said was life or death? I wanted it to cable a sonnet to my wife."

"Cable a sonnet—your wife?" gasped Wayne, unable to fix his mind on either declaration of madness from the sheer force of the other.

"Didn't know I was married, did you? Three years ago I married the loveliest lady in Paris—a wonder woman—a John Stuart Mill type of mind, and with it charm, beauty, sex—never saw such a combination. I suppose you wonder, with all that, why she married me, but a creature like that has got to have its touch of human weakness, and that was my God-given fortune. Besides"—he flicked the ash from his cigarette with nicotine-stained fingers—"I wasn't drinking then, not a drop.

"We met in the Abruzzi, where I went to paint, and she to rest after finishing a book on sociology. We were married in Rome, at the American embassy. We went to London in the autumn—you know how the damp and chill of an English autumn get into the marrow of my bones—and I began to drink. She didn't disapprove; she simply left me. I didn't even know where she went. But two weeks ago I had a letter from Freswell—you remember Freswell—little chap who ruined himself painting Japanese. He said she was in Paris, and he had never seen her looking so beautiful."

"But the sonnet, man! People don't cable sonnets—" And Wayne's New England thrift rose mutinously at the thought.

"Alas! neither could I, all of it. As you know, there are fourteen lines in a sonnet. Fourteen lines of five feet each, say an average of eight words go to every five feet—that will give you about a hundred and twelve words. Cable messages to Paris are sent at the rate of twenty-three cents a word. A little calculation will show you I hadn't enough to cable it all, but I sent the octave, intact. The sextet, which was infinitely more beautiful, I couldn't

send. I have it in my pocket—would you like to hear it?"

"Not now, thanks; later. The atmosphere of this place is hardly suitable to so intimate a poem as that must have been. But didn't the cable clerk, or telegraph operator, or whoever it was that took the message—didn't he question the sending of such a thing?"

"No, he was a Frenchman—most courteous nation in the world."

"And you mean to tell me that the fellow actually cabled eight lines of poetry for you and did not call up the psychopathic ward of Bellevue? You astonish me."

"If he'd been an American, doubtless he would have given me in charge as soon as he discovered that my cable had nothing to do with either the buying or the selling of stocks or bonds—but he was a Frenchman, a man of sensibility."

"Doubtless he congratulated you on the beauty of the lines," said Wayne, utterly disgusted.

"Not at all. He was too considerate to intrude on my private concerns, even to the extent of congratulating me on a work of art." He lit a fresh cigarette. "You might be interested in knowing what inspired me to write that sonnet—it was a genuine inspiration. In that gaping crowd at the end of the hall, I saw my wife's astral body. We both take a great interest in theosophy. When we were together, we tried many interesting experiments—precipitating our astral bodies, sending telepathic messages; but for a long time I've not been able to get into psychic communication with her. But to-night, when I was at my lowest ebb, making a fool and a beast of myself, I looked up and saw her—my Lydia."

"Lydia? Lydia who—what?"

"My wife's reputation in her own line having been made before she married me, we agreed that she shouldn't take my name—she still keeps her own—Lydia Wingfield Barnard."

Wayne rumbled his hair. He didn't do it often, but it was an occasion for extremes.

"Astral body, ghost, spook nothing! Lydia Wingfield Barnard is General Parkinson's niece, Clara's cousin. We all came over from Paris together two weeks ago on the *Caronia*. You saw her in the flesh, and doubtless highly disgusted her. Your sonnet cabling was in vain. She's down there now at the Devon." He rumbled his hair again, and then burst into wild peals of laughter. "Ha, ha, that's good—best ever! You're old Parkinson's nephew! In the family, by Jove! I rather think he hasn't anything on me for the company I keep, seeing the connection—" And Wayne laughed again.

Havergill looked comically distressed. "My dear fellow, don't tell me that that insufferable old ass you were talking to was our uncle! I've always feared the worst, and sedulously avoided meeting him, but that—that— He looks like a senile Puck."

And Wayne, remembering the general's comments on his unknown nephew, softly whistled a little chanson, the refrain of which was:

"It all depends on the point of view—view—view."

The particular point of view."

"Of course I've known his type, the reserve warrior; excellent reason why the battle's never fought when he's present. Spends his declining years having busts and portraits made—always in his military chiffons— Why, man alive, there are artists in Paris who've lived on old Parky for years! It was the one drawback to Lydia—that connection."

Wayne lit a cigar, rose. "And now what's your pleasure? To return to the Devon, attempt a truce with Lydia—and her uncle—or—"

"Of course, I shall see my wife," announced Havergill, as if he were the most desirable husband in Christendom.

"Poor girl—she can't help her uncle." And waving aside his friend's offer of a room and the services of the hotel barber and valet, he buttoned up Wayne's fur coat and prepared to depart.

"I've had my bath, you know," he said airily, "and I never was a boulevardier to stick at such trifles." So arm in arm they returned to the Devon.

On the way to the Devon, Wayne found his stock of credulity momentarily evaporating. Lydia Wingfield Barnard, the most aloof, sufficient-unto-herself, goddess-on-a-pedestal type of woman he had ever known—the wife of Havergill! He decided to leave the debatable husband in the smoking room, rap on Miss Barnard's door, and tentatively inquire for Clara, leaving the political economist to "tell the story of her life" or not; if, indeed, there was any story to be told. He decided to walk up a sort of fire-escape back stairs, thus evading any inquiring friends whom he might meet in the elevator.

He had climbed four flights, and stopped for breath on the small, square platform, when he saw a man, in his stocking feet, cautiously making his way down. The red electric light bulbs that lit these back stairs at infrequent intervals made it difficult to see, and it was not till they were face to face that he recognized General Parkinson, his hands and arms full of hatboxes, sword cases, epaulet holders. Immediately behind the general, but almost entirely concealed under a burden of uniforms, traveling coats, canes, and umbrellas, came Baffin, the confidential servant and valet of the old war god. Something in the furtive manner of the two warned the sculptor to put a brave face on his back-stair climbing.

"Well, general, you appear to be burlarizing your own effects," he remarked genially.

"God bless my soul, sir, it is terrible! I don't dare send to the trunk room for

my boxes. My position, sir, makes me terribly apprehensive that this scandal will get into the papers, so Baffin and I are taking a few scant necessities"—he glanced at the sword case and epaulet holder—"to my daughter's room. We shall pack there, and hope to escape by midnight."

"Escape where? What's happened?"

"Ah, my dear Wayne, you can afford to jest, you who so nobly took to yourself this disreputable family connection. But if it should get into the papers, the merciless American papers, that a nephew of mine, by marriage, stole a bath—I should be chagrined, sir, past holding up my head. How can I thank you for concealing this terrible family connection? Of course, we all knew that poor Lydia had thrown herself away—but we never dreamed of such a hideous *mésalliance* as this."

"Not as bad as that, general. A shave will do wonders. A bath——"

"Never say bath to me! And the worst of it is that poor Lydia means to take him back, says he's the most delightful man in the world, and that she brought him to this pass. No, my dear sir, Palm Beach for Clara and me before the papers get hold of it. And you and Clara may be married as soon as we are out of reach of the New York press. You're great—great to have stood silent while I so outrageously abused you and this fellow, my nephew by marriage."

Wayne pressed the general's hand, took a half dozen hatboxes from him, and piously continued the pilgrimage downstairs. "Now why should I tell him I didn't know either?" He winked to himself. "The chance to be a hero comes so seldom."



### The Southern Cross

LOST in the splendor of the tropic night  
 The twilight calm;  
 In golden glory fall the moonbeams bright  
 On fern and palm.  
 In these strange starlit skies I seek in vain  
 The stars I know;  
 Far to the southward, harbinger of pain,  
 A cross hangs low.  
 On Southern palms, as on thy Northern pines,  
 The bright stars shine;  
 But in thy sky love's constellation shines—  
 The cross in mine.  
 Some day thy smile shall bless the lone years passed  
 On this far shore;  
 And from my sky the cross shall fade at last,  
 To shine no more.

RALPH LINN.

# Blood Will Tell

## Vingie E. Roe

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

CAPTAIN lay face down on the hay at its highest point in the big loft. His bare feet were crossed, their ten wry-nailed, blood-blistered toes cramped tensely, his arms were flung above his head; and his shoulders, in their faded shirt, rose and fell with a marked rhythm.

It was a painful fact that Captain was most undignifiedly weeping, and that with an utter abandon that was beyond shame.

The usual hauteur of fourteen had vanished for once like the mist of the morning. The floodgates were open, the seas were broken up, and woe reigned. So deep was the inundation of anguish that the high call of his mother announcing dinner to half the fields of the farm failed even so much as to cause a stir in the supine figure—and that was proof positive and irrefutable.

The boy was undone, and the cause of his despair stood below, quietly munching the hay to which he no longer had a right—as sorry a piece of horseflesh as one might care to look upon.

His ragged old coat had once been a shining chestnut sorrel. Now it was faded by years of wear in all sorts of weather. His hips stood up like poles under a sagging tent, and his ribs likewise. A thin old rat tail lifted itself at the rump with a jauntiness never surrendered.

It was that very jauntiness that endeared old Clean Heels to his owner, that caused him to expound the theory that "blood will tell," with all the wisdom of his youth. It had stayed by the old horse in all the vicissitudes of his varied fortunes, and still perked his ears, arched his thin neck, lifted his sprung knees high when he stepped, and lent his scarecrow frame a ridiculous grace. If one had the heart to know and love horses—as Captain had—it also gave him the manners of the gentle born, the eager intelligence, the faithful love of an upright nature.

That Clean Heels' fortunes had once been high, Captain knew, by that telepathy of the initiate which passes over time and space. Since the old horse had come into his possession through the delinquency of a peddler who had been ill at the farm and upon recovering had left without payment save his horse and wagon, the boy, to whom his father had given the sorry outfit in an outburst of wry humor, had dreamed great dreams of Clean Heels' youth.

He saw him in harness before a skeleton sulky, his lean length shining in the autumn sun—for it would be fair time at the county seat—his head held high without a check, his nostrils flaring, his full eyes bright with the joy of the track. Captain saw the smooth course, the crowds at the rail, the stream of horses coming to the start, the jockey-



"Mother," he called, "bring Stella another cake—a little browner. These are a little too pale."

ing, and at last the get-away. There would be one or two ahead, maybe three, and the chestnut sorrel beginning to rock lightly as he found his feet.

In the first quarter, Captain saw him shake his head, stretch his neck a bit, and begin to reach out. The boy's eyes always shone with the glory of the vision that followed—the horse beginning to roll in his pacing gait, his hind legs far apart and pushing the earth behind him as he crept up and overhauled this and that one of those ahead, running neck and neck at the half, just to make it a race, and then lying down and rocking away from them all down the home stretch, to slide under the wire

so far ahead that they had to wait for the others to show up.

Many an hour had Captain wasted as he curried and rubbed old Clean Heels, dreaming this one grand race. And the old thoroughbred repaid with usury all the boy's loving care, for he followed him like a dog, squealed his welcome across three fields, and had once jumped a fence to meet him the sooner; and it had been a startling jump, too, a revelation in its grace, its height, and its confidence.

But now chaos had come upon the friends, though only Captain knew it; Clean Heels was mercifully spared by his limited intelligence. Captain's



father, ever a practical man and given to no weak sentiment, had struck the bell of doom.

Clean Heels must be gotten rid of.

It had been a bad year for the farmers. There had been a drouth in June and July, and the hay had fallen far short. Also, the corn crop was causing many a grave face among the men on market days at the county seat, and many were planning to sell off such stock as they did not actually need.

Captain's father, John McDaniels, had begun hedging earliest of all—and he had begun with the useless old horse.

"Son," he had said firmly that morning, as he had passed the huge plate of steaming buckwheat cakes, "you are old enough to understand the economics of agriculture. You know what the labor is, what the running expenses are, and that everything must pay its way. Also, you know what the past season has been, what the prospects are for the coming winter. We must close-haul and sail tight to the wind. I am selling Brindle and Babe, as they have both fallen off in their butter-fat average. I expect you to come in on the tightening. You must get rid of old Clean Heels. He is useless, a dead weight on the farm, and his keep would winter a working horse."

John McDaniels had not looked at his son. He had been busy helping the little sister, an elfin, gold-haired creature, to the choicest dainties of the table, and he had not seen the ashen pallor that had spread over the boy's thin, homely face. He had given his dictum, a practical decision abetted by his shrewd judgment, and he had dismissed the matter with his last words.

"Mother," he had called to the sonsy woman deftly plying her craft at the griddle in the other room that her family might enjoy the hottest and lightest cakes, "mother, bring Stella another cake—a little browner. These are a little too pale."

And he had fussed over his seven-year daughter like a hen with one chick; for this was his one weakness, the one spot where his firmness bent like a reed in the wind.

The mouthful that Captain had just succeeded in fitting into a place entirely too small for it had stuck suddenly, and grown to terrifying proportions, like the haystacks that sometimes oppress us in dreams at night.

To save his life, the boy, a moment before hungry with a "growing" appetite, could not have swallowed it. A deadly nausea had come over him, and he had surreptitiously transferred the morsel to his plate.

Then he had slid off his chair, and wobbled from the room.

That had been at six o'clock. All the autumn morning he wept and shivered in the loft. At noon he heard his mother's call, but he did not move. He heard his father come hunting him, call up the loft ladder, go out, and swear a bit as he made ready for the shucking field. Captain was committing a grave offense on a farm—shirking his share of work—but he could not face the world. He stayed in the loft all day, only creeping down to turn Clean Heels out for a drink at the trough.

When he slipped into the house at evening, his mother met him with anxious eyes and a friendly arm about his chilled shoulders, but his father was to be reckoned with, and the reckoning was stern and sharp.

The next day Captain was up betimes, doing more than his share to make up for his wasted day.

It was a glorious day in early fall, blue and gold, with a nip in its sweeping winds; a call carried thrice its usual distance. But the boy saw nothing of its beauty. He had turned Clean Heels out in the far pasture, and whenever he looked that way, he could see him picking at the dried grass. The cornfield lay on a hillside, and was a matter

of pride to John McDaniels, who had made it yield in defiance of his neighbors.

From it, one could see full half his farm, the house, the willow-fringed stream, and the winding road to town, two miles away. It was a pretty prospect, and, if the crops had only been fair, the shrewd farmer would have been more than content.

The two wagons, driving along the rows, filled rapidly under the hands of the two hired men, McDaniels, and Captain, for whoever worked for McDaniels—worked. The sun warmed up the frosted husks, and brought the pungent smell of the autumn fields from every side. Here and there small yellow pumpkins added their gold to the crawling wagons.

By both McDaniels and Captain, the sharp details of that golden morning were to be long remembered.

At ten o'clock the father, glancing down over the sloping field, beheld little Stella coming daintily along the ragged corn rows with a basket and a bucket—cookies and buttermilk for the mid-morning lunch. She picked her way carefully, for, like her brother, she willfully refused to wear the heavy winter shoes her father would long since have put on her.

McDaniels stopped work, and, while the men ate and talked for a few minutes, he held his daughter on his lap and played with her flaxen curls. Stella was a queer little creature, young for her years, and with more than the usual childish innocence.

When the last cookie had disappeared, the child took the empty basket and pail, and went back along the field. Her errand was done, and she might idle a bit on the return trip; so she poked at a gopher hole here, and spent a while there trying to roll one of the gnarled pumpkins.

The huskers were busily snatching and splitting, and the golden ears were

flying through the air, when a shrill, high cry stopped them sharply. At its first clear peal, John McDaniels' heart stopped for the space of three beats, to plunge on again like a bursting engine. He flung himself down the corn rows like a maniac. Far ahead he could see little Stella humped over, her hair shining in the sun, and his first horrified thought was that some torpid snake had been stirred out by the little girl's inquisitive fingers. But when he flung himself on his knees beside her, he saw, not a snake, but a forgotten corn knife, heavy and sharp, and his little daughter clutching a thin ankle. The scattered stalks below were sprayed with the blood that shot out in jets with the beating of her little heart. The man almost fainted, but righted himself, clutched the little leg above the cut, and strove to stop the flow.

When the others rushed up his face was a mask of agony.

The artery had drawn back, and, despite the efforts they made at a tourniquet, still forced out its precious treasure in great spurts. John McDaniels, usually cool and sane, worked like a lunatic, but he could not prevail. The little, pale child was already paler; she whimpered with fright, and clung to his neck.

"God!" he shouted at last. "Go! Go, some of you! Go for the doc at Bridgetown!"

The men looked at the heavy horses, and began unhitching the lightest.

Captain had stood by in mute terror, unnoticed. Now he leaped forward, with eyes of fire in his homely boy's face. "I'll go, father!" he cried. "I'll get the doc!" And he was away in great leaps, flying over field toward the far pasture.

For a moment John McDaniels raised his voice in blasphemy that there was no way of haste, and looked bitterly at the flying boy. He dared not move



*The farm fence was before him, with the road beyond, and they saw him change, and take it like a bird.*

the child against his knee, and every muscle in his body was tight as a wire.

But the men were watching Captain.

As he ran, a great vision grew before the boy's eyes—a stretch of smooth track, a vast crowd, and a string of horses; among them a gleaming chestnut sorrel. He raised his cupped hands and sent a shrill whistle pealing across the fields. Far over in the pasture the old horse heard it and lifted his head, that thin old head that reared so regally, so ridiculously! Then he squealed a joyous answer, trotted a step or two, broke gait, and squared away in his spraddling pace to meet his adored

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master. He came on to the wire fence, changed gaits again, took it high and wide, raced up, and stopped beside the boy, whinnying softly.

Instantly, without rein or saddle, Captain mounted, ran a trembling hand along the wispy mane, spoke a word in Clean Heels' ears, turned him toward the winding road with a touch on his neck, pressed his knees and toes inward in that intimate speech of a boy to his horse, and they started.

At first John McDaniels did not look—he was hopeless and wild. But the men, standing in awkward silence, were watching. At a word from one of

them, the master raised his eyes for a moment, and what he beheld almost gave him a belief in God.

Down across the smooth fallow lot old Clean Heels was racing, with Captain, white-faced with fear and excitement, clinging like a monkey on his withers. The ancient thoroughbred, put down to speed once more, had found his feet. With head stretched level, nostrils flaring, hips low and working like reckless semaphores, long forelegs reaching for the ground in front, hind feet pushing it behind him and flying wide and low, he flew down across the field with a grace and speed that forced the onlookers to forget his ugliness.

The farm fence was before him, with the road beyond, and they saw him change, and take it like a bird. For a moment he stopped, hesitated only to receive Captain's direction, then sailed away down the smooth country road, in deed and in truth the very racer of the boy's dreams. Only at the county fairs had the little group of watchers seen such a flight. Rocking beautifully, spread-eagling for all the world like last year's winner, moving faster and faster as if something within him were gaining strength every minute, the old horse fled out of sight behind the encroaching trees.

John McDaniels, holding his child, and praying for the first time in years, raised his wild eyes to the blue autumn skies.

"Let him make it, Lord!" he cried in anguish. "Let him make it, and I'll serve in Your temple the rest of my days!"

The time that passed then could not be counted in minutes. Its measure was lost in eternity. But when it had drawn out until the little, fair child in the father's arm was growing listless, and that father was like a dying man himself, something shot out from behind the trees—a gaunt, old chestnut sorrel

with a gaunt, old man atop, his long coat tails flying, his high hat gone, and his ancient cuffs shot far out of his rusty black sleeves; the village doctor, who had had the ride of his life, and who slid tremulously down by the fence, and hurried across the field.

He did not speak—he had neither breath nor time—but went at his work; gallant work, shrewd and skilled.

An hour later he straightened up from the white bed in the farmhouse, and glanced for the first time at John McDaniels over his glasses, his hands on his hips and his feet together.

"She'll live," he said briefly. "Care and feeding. Be as good as new in a month when I've made her some new blood—plenty of iron. And John"—he finished with a different note in his voice—"what'll you take for that boy and that horse? I'd like to own 'em both."

"Nothing on earth," said John McDaniels oddly.

When Captain, panting and sweat-streaked, trotted wearily up to the farm gate, his father was waiting for him.

"How——" gasped the boy.

"All right," said the man. "She'll live, son, and you saved her—you and old Clean Heels and the doc."

Captain began to choke in sheer relief and reaction.

"And Clean Hee——" He could get no farther.

"In the box stall, son, where he shall stay for the rest of his life—with the best provender on the place. Come!"

And John McDaniels laid his arm on his son's lean shoulder as they went up along the road.

When Captain could talk, he said only one thing about that grand race.

"I tell you, father, blood will tell, won't it?"

And his father answered gravely that it would.



ILLUSTRATED BY H. F. NONNAMAKER

ALBERTA, although her straight-ahead gaze did not appear to waver an inch, was fully aware that Sidney Brill was cutting across the street to intercept her at the corner. Without seeming to see him at all, she was really giving him her deepest attention. She was appraising his rather stocky figure in a new, *very* brown suit, with wine-red tie, and socks to match, and was even pondering some unreadable quality in the hovering smile of his thin-lipped mouth.

He stepped up on the walk in front of her, lifting his straw hat with a flourish.

"Oh, you bright eyes!"

Her surprise was well simulated. "Why, Mr. Brill! Where'd you drop from?"

"Oh, off a chunk of luck." He regarded her smilingly, as he pushed his hat back with a left hand upon whose little finger a good-sized diamond gleamed.

"I'm glad things are coming your way." There was just the faintest accent of envy on the "your."

His eyes narrowed. "Aren't they comin' yours, little girl?"

"Not what you'd notice."

"What's the row?"

"Oh, nothing special." She turned it off with a little laugh. "I'm just kind of sick of this same old winding brook, that's all."

"Get in my boat," he urged in a lowered voice. "I'll show you some new scenery, kiddie."

"Oh, you rich and great!" she scoffed, but the new diamond had perhaps attended to that subtle work which is, after all, the main business of diamonds.

"Come on, let's have dinner somewhere. Aren't you up to a few rags or a tango afterward?"

She hesitated. Her hazel eyes did not meet his. "I can't to-night," she murmured.

"Aw, can *him*," Sidney advised, a little impatiently.

She smiled with her lips only, and did not reply.

His shrewd eyes searched her pretty, pale face. "Well, let's say to-morrow night, then. Show or something?"

"All right," she assented, still with that faint note of hesitation.

He brightened. It was not the first time he had invited, but it was the first time she had accepted. Her very lack of enthusiasm made him doubly triumphant, for it made him feel that he was conquering resistance.

"All right," he cried. "I'll meet you right here. How'll that be? Or shall I come to the house? And we'll go wherever you say."

"I'll meet you here," she said. "About this time. I've got to go now. Good-by."



*Her surprise was well simulated. "Why, Mr. Brill! Where'd you drop from?"*

"To-morrow it is. I'll be here with my hair in a braid. Don't you forget now."

"I won't. Good-by."

She turned suddenly, and hurried on. Her heart had quickened, but she frowned and bit her lip. The throb was not for Sidney Brill; it was that, after standing wearily in one spot for

so long, she felt that she had taken a definite step forward.

Alberta Evans, commonly called "Bertie," dined alone and somewhat scrappily in the room she shared with Mabel McClellan, who worked in a corset shop. Mabel had the good fortune to be dining out. The whole matter of Bertie's dinner, including the washing of dishes, did not overlap a scant half hour.

At a quarter to eight she was once more descending to the street. She had changed her plain store dress for a pink cotton rantine and redressed her brown hair, presenting a distinctly freshened appearance, although her eyes showed how tired she was.

To the eyes of Martin Hannon, hastening to meet her, she was the sweet pool, green trees, and fresh zephyrs of an oasis to a weary traveler in the desert. But, though his soul lighted little candles of adoration in those eyes for her, she only saw in the sadness of his smile, the droop of his usually elastic figure, that he was bearing dreary news. She had long ceased to expect anything else, she told herself bitterly, and her lips set in that little straight line that spells mutiny.

"Hello, sweeter," he said softly, and reached out his hand for hers.

Her smile was only a half smile, and twisted. Her slim fingers lay listlessly, unansweringly, in his. The situation was not new. He

sighed.

He turned, and they walked on together toward a little square that spread a patch of green carpet over a tiny space of the city's pavements. They spoke of commonplaces.

"Been hot, hasn't it?" he said.

She nodded. "Soon be cold enough now, though."



"Mabel out with Frank?"

"Uhm-hmm."

They found a bench and sat a moment in that silence that seems a sort of lingering on the farewell to a truce. She stared off at the street with dull eyes; he kept glancing at her anxiously. Then he put his hand gently over hers.

"Say, y'tired?"

"Oh, a little."

He bent toward her, extending his arm along the back of the bench around her shoulders. His hand tightened over hers, his eyes questioned her with a kind of passionate solicitude.

"Honey, I——"

"Don't!" she said, with low-voiced sharpness.

He withdrew his arm, then slowly, with that deliberate determination with which a brave man faces danger, he drew a letter from his pocket. "Now we've come to it at last," was in the very air about them. Indeed everything that had gone before was merely preliminary to this moment. Martin fingered the letter, but he did not open it.

"The little girl's coming," he began slowly.

Bertie eyed the letter hostilely. "Oh, I could guess that."

"I wrote to her father's folks," Martin continued, "but none of them was fixed to take care of her. Besides, the doctor out there said if she'd come here, there's a surgeon here could likely cure her lameness."

"You to pay for it, of course," Bertie commented bitterly.

"There's nobody else." He hesitated, then: "I got to do it," he said almost fiercely. "My only sister's child—I couldn't leave her to strangers. Don't you see I got to do it, Bertie?"

She turned her head away. A little shrug of her shoulders suggested her refusal to accept any responsibility in the decision.

"I know it's hard," he jerked out. "Lord, do you think it's been easy for

me to give up the money I'd saved for our—for us? But there she was, sick and helpless. I couldn't refuse. And now it's little Amy—left all alone. I got to take her."

"I suppose you have," replied the girl lifelessly. "I'm not saying you shouldn't."

Martin kept thrusting his fist into the palm of his left hand.

"Sometimes I've almost hated the poor kid for—for it all. I—I hate to ask you to keep on waiting, Bertie. But I know it'll take all I can scrape for a while now—for the doctors and all. I guess——"

"I guess we'd better quit," she said.

His restless hands stopped, and he sat quite still, not looking at her, just staring down at the mixture of tramped earth and peanut shells beneath his feet.

She went on in disjointed, half-breathless little sentences:

"I'm tired of it—I'm tired of it all! I suppose it's awful fine of you to do it. And I ought to help, I suppose. I ought to be patient, and kind, and lovin' to the kid and all that rot. But I'm not—I don't feel that way. I don't want to be noble—I want to be happy. All my life it's been like this. I couldn't do this or have that because somebody was sick, or dead, or broke. Always something. I'm sick of it, I tell you! I want something myself. I want a little peace, and rest, and pleasure. I'm tired of givin' up all the time. I——" She broke off, to keep back the tears of weariness and anger.

"I don't want to quit," cried Martin. "I want you. Don't you see it's not because I don't think more of you than a thousand kids? But some way it seems like I got to do this. Seems like I've just got to!"

Poor Martin did not know "I could not love thee, dear, so much——," he only knew that he *must* sacrifice himself and the girl he loved for this sister's

little lame girl whom he had never seen. Bertie was silent.

"Maybe it won't be so long," Martin pleaded. "Maybe it won't cost so much, and she'll get well quick and all."

"Well, and after that she'll be to keep, won't she? She's only six, you said. She'll be to keep and look after for the Lord knows how long. Oh, I know I'm not acting nice! I'm not showin' you how good I am, Martin—I'm showin' you how *bad* I am! But I don't care. When I get married, I want to quit skimpin' and savin'. I want a home and a husband that can take care of me right. There! I've got it pretty near all said now. Oh, I know you're doing right. I don't know why doing the right thing, though, always has to be what you don't want to do."

"I don't blame you, Bertie," said Martin simply. "I know you've always had kind of a hard time. I meant things should be different for you when we were married. I could have made them so, too, if this hadn't come up. If you'd just be patient a while longer——"

Bertie stood up suddenly. "I'm out of it," she said. "I've been drawing on my stock of patience all my life, and there's none left. What's the use keepin' this farce up any longer? We've quit right now, Martin."

Martin rose, too, and stood close, looking down at her. He was a little white around the mouth.

"I've not quit. You can if you like. I can't stop you, of course. But you're my girl, and you've got to keep on belongin' to me whether you like it or not. Or maybe I better make it that I belong to you. You said once you loved me, Bertie. Say, didn't you mean it?"

She was like a little rebel flag planted at the king's gate, so unyielding the slender staff of her body, so flaming in her eyes the colors of mutiny.

"Maybe I did mean it. But what good does lovin' do a woman? Just seems to

mean givin' up a little more, and cryin' a few more tears. I guess I'll quit that game, too."

He did not reply. He only looked at her out of that sad helplessness with which one seeks answer to the child who asks: "*Why* is there pain?"

They turned in silence, then, and walked back the way they had come. There was a great yellow moon just coming up, and a faint chill, the first hint of fall, was in the air.

Once he said: "Do you mean I'm not to see you any more?"

And she replied briefly: "Yes."

In the shadow of the tall old house where she lived, they paused at last.

"Look here, Bertie," he began, then. "Listen, I——"

"No, no, *no*!" she cried. "I don't want to listen! What's the use of beginning all over again? We've said everything over and over and over! It's all settled, I tell you. What's the use making each other miserable? Go on, now."

His big body stiffened. "Just as you say. Good-by." He put out his hand.

She could not refuse this, but her hand went to his with a little flutter of impatience. His closed over it like a vise. Then quickly she was crushed against him; his lips pressed hers swiftly, passionately, in a kiss that left her breathless. He released her almost with a sort of deliberation.

"Good-by," he said steadily, lifted his hat, and walked away.

No woman can be kissed so and be left with more than a shred of self-possession. If she loves the man, body and soul cry out for him; if she does not love him, helpless rage consumes her as hotly. And she never forgets, either the kiss or him that gave it.

Bertie Evans did not look after Martin, nor did he turn for a single backward glance. She leaned against the dirty old balustrade and covered her face with her hands. She breathed with



*His eyes questioned her with a kind of passionate solicitude. "Honey, I——" "Don't," she said, with low-voiced sharpness.*

little sobs, although her eyes were dry. Presently she stumbled up the dim stairs and let herself into her room.

Mabel was not there. Bertie threw off her hat and lighted the gas. The sweet cool of the night outside had not entered the house yet. She forced the narrow windows up another inch and drew a deep breath. It was still early, but she began to prepare for bed at once.

An hour or so later Mabel came in. Mabel was blond, with one of those big-busted, slim-waisted figures. Her mouth was full and good-humored, but her eyes were a little close together, and she had a way of half closing them when she looked at you.

Mabel was not deceived by Bertie's apparent deep slumber. She came over and sat down on the edge of the bed.

"Asleep, peaches?" she queried.

Bertie stirred, yawned, stretched forth a slender arm, and turned her deep glance toward her friend's smiling face.

"What d'ye want, you blond hussy?" she replied, in the jesting tone habitual between them. "What do you mean by wakin' up an honest workin' girl at this time of night?"

Mabel waved her left hand back and forth over the other's face. The gaslight danced and sparkled in the diamond on her third finger. Bertie sat up, seizing the hand in both her own.

"Oh, you kid!" she cried affectionately. "It's all fixed, is it? Heaven bless you, my only child!" They kissed laughingly.

Mabel examined the ring, sighing contentedly. "The deed's done," she affirmed. "And just so's there won't be any slip between lip and dipper, it's coming off next week."

"Next week! That soon? What's your rush?"

"Well, he wants it, and I think I can give up my job without pining away any. What's the good waiting?"

"No good, I guess."

"Frank's picked out the swellest flat already. Wasn't he sure of me, though!"

"Was he so sure of you?"

Mabel grimaced. "Well, why not? He's got two hundred coming in regular every month. I'd be a bright girl turning that down, wouldn't I? And Frank respects me noble intellect, dearie."

Bertie pinched her lower lip thoughtfully with thumb and finger.

"You just marrying him because he's a born money-maker, Mabel?"

Mabel took off the inevitable big black hat with the equally inevitable big red rose, stabbed it with the pin, and tossed it to the floor beside the couch, before she replied.

"Not just because." She leaned back and adjusted her own pillow behind her fair head. "I guess some because he can kiss me so my heart skips two beats. But while we're so confidential, my little sister, I may say that if he was only makin' fifteen per, I might discipline that misbehaving organ!"

Bertie did not comment.

"This is me offering up thanks that I don't have to. I'm just as happy!" She sighed ecstatically, and flashed her new ring before her own appreciative eyes.

It flashed into Bertie's eyes, too, and brought to her mind one very similar on the hand of Sidney Brill.

"And they lived happy forever afterward," hummed Mabel. "I've got it figured out that if you can just get love handcuffed to a little money in the bank, it eases up all these matrimonial jolts something great. Love in a cottage may have worked all right in ancient history, but take it from me, dearie, love in a fourth-floor back and a year-before-last's hat is a different proposition. Vain pomp and piffle of this world, I'm all for you! 'For we're only poor weak mortals, after all! Is that right? Say, I ought to get a blank record, and preserve some of these bright thoughts, yes?"

She laughed out of that most perfect joy—satisfaction with oneself, one's wit, and life. But something not quite whole-hearted in Bertie's response caught her quick perception. She turned her head on the pillow and looked at the girl out of half-closed eyes.

"You and Martin——" she began.

"Not Martin," put in Bertie quickly.

"Oh," said Mabel, "not Martin, eh?" There was a pause. "Do you mean it's off?"

"Yes," said Bertie slowly.

"Why? He's got to take the kid, and all?" Mabel, of course, was aware of the situation.

"Yes."

Mabel ran her fingers thoughtfully through her hair until it fluffed out like an unsanctified aureole.

"Lord," she sighed presently, "what a darned mess! Now what did that have to happen for?"

Bertie began to speak in those fierce little sentences she always used when moved.

"Of course, I'm sorry for the child, but what could I do? You can see how it'll be, where every cent he makes will have to go. What's the use starting in on a whole lifetime of that? Better quit right now and—and forget it."

"It's a hard proposition all right,"

Mabel agreed. "I'm awful sorry it had to happen. I know Martin thinks an awful lot of you, and he's a good, steady fellow. He looks pretty man-size alongside a lot of these four-flushers."

"Martin's all right," said Bertie, in a low voice.

"Well"—Mabel sat up on the edge of the bed again, and began taking down her hair—"it's your own row, kiddie, and it's no use my tryin' to hoe it. I like Martin, but"—she rose with a shrug—"I don't know's I'd want to be a real tin martyr just to own him."

It was some time before either spoke again; then Bertie said: "I'm going out to-morrow with Sidney Brill."

"Oh, Sid!" The name in Mabel's tone carried a complete if discreet synopsis of Mr. Brill. "Well, if you stick to Sid, I guess you'll wear diamonds—some of the time, anyway," she added, with wise afterthought.

Just as some men try to deaden disappointment or remorse with dissipation, so Bertie Evans plunged into the cheap gayeties of her world in a wooing of forgetfulness. This proceeding in high and low is an instinctive realization of time's certain healing—if we can but narcotize the first pangs, the wound must soon become only a scar, painless save perhaps for an occasional "weather ache." Blessed cynicism of life's lessons!

It is an opportunity most excellently suited to the ingratiations of the new love. Mr. Brill seemed to know this—perhaps instinctively, too. He contrived many festivities for the week before Mabel's marriage, and when she and Frank had radiantly departed upon their honeymoon, Bertie's loneliness made her even more responsive to his efforts.

Park and beach and dance and picture show, preceded frequently by dinners, which latter have a financial as well as a pleasurable value to the girl

who works, followed one another in quick succession.

Perhaps Bertie was somewhat surprised that Martin did not return to plead his cause with her once more. She told herself she was glad he understood that she really meant it. But a woman is always hurt when she is so taken at her word. "He didn't care much, after all," pride whispers. She was exceedingly gay with Sidney, never for a moment allowing any drift toward sentiment. She postponed with an apprehensive procrastination the inevitable decision. Yet when he was no longer to be put off, she quite meant to marry him.

Each night she seemed to dread more the going home to her room. She would have missed Mabel greatly in any case, but now she needed doubly Mabel's cheeriness, her little-world wisdom, her mere good-tempered companionship.

Some weeks had passed since Martin had parted from her with that kiss upon her lips. She was with Sidney in the park one Sunday afternoon when she saw a man walking with a little lame girl. It was Martin, proceeding with slow, careful steps, his eyes fixed upon the child, who swung at his side, it seemed almost *dancingly*, upon her little crutches. And her hair danced, too, in little bright curls, and her little face had that wild-rose coloring seen in delicate children. Every moment she lifted her eyes to his face. A gay little fairy she was, laughing and chattering and hopping along so cheerfully beside the tall, grave young man.

"You will, Uncle Martin, won't you?" she chirped. "Won't that be fun, Uncle Martin, won't it?"

Martin answered in a low tone. His glance was tender, protecting; he was smiling. To Bertie's relief, they turned down a cross path. Martin had not seen her, or had not seemed to.

She was torn by emotions that she could not analyze, but that frightened



*Martin came and found them so. He stopped on the threshold, startled and uncertain.*

her by their unsuspected power. She could not rid herself of that picture of Martin and the child. Intuitively she understood the relation growing between them. How doubly dear this child would become because she had cost him so dearly! She would get well—there was vitality and will in her little face. She would comfort and console him. Bertie even foresaw in this moment how Martin's whole life might

twine around this living emblem of his self—sacrifice. Bertie loved him, and so could not bear to see him consoled!

Sidney misread her preoccupation. He thought she was at last falling into that mood of sentiment he desired. After they had said good night, his arm suddenly fell about her waist.

"Are you 'bout ready to say the word?" he whispered. "Say, I'm crazy about you, honest. Let's get married, will you? What do you say, Bertie?"

She started away from him. "I'm not ready, Sid," she faltered.

"Wait a while. I don't know—honest I don't know what I—want to do."

"Aw, come on," he urged. "Let's surprise Mabel and Frank. Be engaged, anyway. Say, won't you?"

"Wait—wait till to-morrow, Sid. I'll tell you, then. I—I want to think."

He laughed confidently. "All right, but—kiss me good night, anyway!"

His lips brushed hers before she could avoid him. Then he went off



down the street, swaggering, already blissfully triumphant.

She threw herself, trembling, upon her bed. She thought of Sidney Brill with a sort of nausea. Yet she had meant, quite meant all along, to marry him. *And leave Martin to that child, hopping along like a little lame sprite!* Strangely, she was no longer thinking of money at all. She seemed indeed to have forgotten that the question all along had been merely one of money, of the practical marriage.

Simple Martin had unwittingly provided himself with the most effective weapon in the great game of love. He had shown his mutinous lady that it was not impossible for her to have a rival. That it was such an innocent one perhaps served to disarm pride more.

"I'm awfully sorry," she told Sidney the next night. "But—but I can't marry you, Sid."

He did not take it just as she expected. "Look here, Bertie, I've kind of thought you meant to take me. What's changed your mind? I'd do the right thing by you," without waiting for her answer. "I can make money, and I'm no booze fighter. Try me, kid. Ain't it kind of lonesome for you with Mabel gone?"

"Oh, Sid," cried the girl, with a nervous sob, "I *want* to take you, but I—I can't, Sid! I did mean to, but I just *can't*—that's all there is to it."

He looked at her curiously. "Just as you say," he said. "Well, if you change your mind, let me know. Good-bye."

For three long evenings she endured the throbbing loneliness of her room. "I can't go on like this," she kept saying to herself.

All this time she was thinking, thinking, thinking, not so much of Martin, but of that little gold-curbed one hopping along so cheerily, so light-heartedly, on two tiny sticks of crutches.

Sometimes we suddenly resolve upon an action without any apparent process of reasoning to lead up to it. It is not, perhaps, at all the thing we meant to do, but suddenly we rise and do it.

So Bertie suddenly found herself in the dusk of the fall evening knocking at the door of a dingy cottage in a side street, where Martin boarded with an old woman who had just strength to do for him and needed the money.

The old woman opened the door, showing a little room very clean and cozy, and there came to Bertie's ears the tap-tap of little crutches making inquisitively for a sight of the visitor.

"Is—Mr. Hannon in?"

"He's out for just a minute. Won't you step in, miss, an' wait for 'im?"

"How do you do?" said the child, with grave politeness.

"How do you do?" replied Bertie unsteadily. She sat down in the chair the old woman placed for her, and held out her hand to the child. "What's your name?"

"Amy. It means beloved." With two tiny hops she was at Bertie's side, cuddling her hand into the girl's.

For a second they regarded each other. Then, "I like you," the child declared confidently. "Your eyes are like lookin' out of the window where the dark is deep. Did you know it?"

Martin came and found them so. He stopped on the threshold, startled and uncertain.

"Look," cried Amy, "we got company, Uncle Martin!"

Bertie's hands fluttered out to him.

"I—I came," she murmured. "Amy likes me, Martin."

He saw quite clearly in her eyes that which meant: "My shoulder to thy burden, too, beloved."

Amy thought his looked as if he were saying his prayers, but what he said was:

"I—I'm awful glad to see you. Won't you—take off your hat?"



WHEN Mrs. Amzi Gooch got back from her trip to Kansas City, she had an idea. Butch Ford said that it paid her to go, but that was because Butch ran the coal yard, and Amzi Gooch had been ordering his shipped in. Then Butch pointed out how ever since Mrs. Gooch had got back from Kansas City she had made Amzi wear a coat, just because the society people of Kansas City wore them. Butch Ford said he would just as soon work in a packing plant as be the husband of a society leader.

Butch Ford said that it would be a lot better if Mrs. Gooch stayed at home and took care of little Yvette Gooch, instead of running down to Kansas City and wearing slit skirts. Then Mrs. Gooch said that Yvette was a lot healthier and prettier than Airdelle Ford ever was or hoped to be. Butch Ford said out in front of the post office, so that it would get back to Mrs. Gooch, that Yvette had a face like the top of a bean bag, and that she squalled most of the time anyway. Then Mrs. Gooch said that Yvette had never cried in her

# Bigger Babies

author of "Mrs. Gooch's Turkey Trot"



life, and that she had heard that the little Ford thing fretted and whined all night long.

Then Mrs. Gooch told about her idea. She said we would have a better-baby fair, just like they had had in Kansas City, and that would settle once for all which was the best baby in Temptation. Amzi Gooch said he would give a hundred dollars to the winning baby, and Butch Ford said that he would be glad to take it.

That very day we started out getting donations and subscriptions for the bet-

ter-baby fair. I guess you don't know how things catch on in Temptation. When anything starts there, it goes with a rush. Yes, siree! By night we had pledged and donated to us a baby buggy, a cap, a pair of baby scales, a set of towels, and a pair of shoes. By noon of the next day Alex Thull, editor of the Temptation *Trumpet*, had heard about it, and toward the end of that week he caught Mrs. Gooch downtown and had an interview with her on the spirit of civic betterment that had prompted her to launch the idea of a

better-baby fair; and by two o'clock that afternoon Amzi Gooch had been approached for a page advertisement to run opposite the interview.

There wasn't any dillydallying around when Temptation started to do anything. The way the merchants and business men got behind the idea and boosted showed how live they were. Lis Culp volunteered to make his store the center for mothers with babies and out-of-town friends; and the Boston Racket Store said it would have a special sale for mothers on the morning of fair day; and Pud Ratch said he would turn his "Lightning Xpress" over to the cause free of charge, providing he got his name on the program. The only hauling there was to do was to take a couple of palms around from the church to the I. O. O. F. Hall, and Pud got one on each hip and took them around in his arms, which was just as good as if he had hitched up, so nobody grudged him his name on the program.

I guess unless you've been in Temptation, you don't know how quickly things can get around. Wednesday night Reverend Spriddle announced it at prayer meeting, and Thursday it was announced at a meeting of the directors of the Farmers' Mutual Telephone Company, and Friday the *Trumpet* came out with a complete account of the fair and Amzi Gooch's full-page advertisement.

Saturday there was a meeting in the I. O. O. F. Hall, where Hattie Culp spoke a piece about Horatius Somebody at a bridge, whose last name we did not get. Then Alex Thull made a speech on "The New Dawn, or Why We Need Better Babies." Then Hattie Culp spoke a funny selection, and Cromwell Oop spoke on "Civic Righteousness, or Have Better Babies Come to Stay?"

Then the Greensfelder Grocery announced a better-babies sale for all of next week, and Mr. Mason, the photog-

rapher, said that he would put a special artistic finish on all photographs of babies made at his shop for a week at the old price. Inside of a week you couldn't hear anything on Main Street except better babies, and how much a child ought to weigh at twenty-two weeks.

The next week the fair was mentioned in the Kansas City *Star*, and a couple of days later the Boston Racket Store sent to a magazine and got a weight chart. They pasted it on the front window with a lot of squares and lines so that you could run your finger up it and see that a baby forty-one weeks old should weigh eighteen and one-half pounds. Then if you bought five dollars' worth, you got a chart free of charge. Mrs. Gooch got two of them, but Mrs. Ford had to go down and copy it off with the stub of a lead pencil.

That's the way the news flew around. Think of getting into the Kansas City *Star*! The next week the *Trumpet* came out, copying the *Star* article, with a long editorial about the future of America being in the hands of better babies. It closed by saying that Yvette Gooch, daughter of our public-spirited citizen and well-known advertiser, the Honorable Amzi Gooch, was standing the hot weather fine. Amzi Gooch's advertisement was still running, with two letters down in the corner—tf—so that if you looked hard enough, you could find the name of the Gooches somewhere in the paper.

There was always lots of news about the Gooches, but only once in a while anything about the Fords. Airdelle was pretty—great, big blue eyes (her father's, everybody said); nice, fat cheeks (her mother's, everybody said); round, transparent ears (her grandmother's); three shiny little teeth (her Grandpa Groom's). Looking into Airdelle's face, Mrs. Ford, with all her mother's pride in her child, knew that



*The Greensfelder Grocery announced a better-babies sale for all of next week.*

Airdelle would win. There was no doubt about that. How could any judge look at big, laughing Airdelle for a moment without wanting to give her the prize? As Mrs. Ford went over the score chart time after time, she could find no place where Airdelle fell short of perfection.

What would she do with the money—with the hundred dollars? There were so many places for it. But her ambition to send Winnie, the oldest,

away to school must be realized. A post card brought her the catalogues of a dozen boarding schools for girls, and, after all the rest of the family had gone to bed, Mrs. Ford would draw the lamp with the red shade over nearer, and read through each catalogue from beginning to end. It was always with a quickening of the heart that she turned over the last page, for down at the bottom would be the price of the board and tuition.

At last she found one—the one she had wanted to go to when she was a girl—and wrote a letter to the principal with the dictionary open before her. In a few days a solicitor came and spread out a legal-looking document before her, on the cleared space on the dining-room table, and so great was the mother's faith in the perfection of her youngest that she signed the document for her oldest.

The I. O. O. F. Hall was astir with life, ablaze with flags, and a-tingle with expectancy. That was the way the *Trumpet* had it. "George Washington Crossing the Delaware" was swathed in yards and yards of bunting; the mosquito netting was taken off "Our Peerless Leader;" and the charcoal drawing of the Honorable Amzi Gooch, made in seven minutes on the street, was wrapped in red, white, and blue, with a rope in front of it.

You never saw such a swarm of people as got into that hall that day. You don't realize how Temptation has grown until you see all the people together. I wouldn't be surprised if it would be six thousand the next time Uncle Sam takes it. Maybe seven thousand. It was ridiculous to say that we had only four thousand five hundred and twenty. Winner started the report, and you know what the Winner people will do. Why, they won't stop at anything! The time Bales & Alkire burned out, the people of Winner said that it was only a three-thousand-dollar fire when it was five thousand dollars, if it was a cent.

The baby buggies were backed against the wall, and in them were the contestants. The carriages had numbers on so that the judges would be absolutely fair. There was no way of telling whose child it was except that everybody knew weeks in advance what babies were going to be entered; and by the relatives hanging over the buggies and saying: "Isn't he cute?" "Isn't Muriel just too sweet for anything?"

and by the mothers standing proudly there, fanning the babies, and wiping off their chins. But outside of that, the judges had no way of knowing.

Reverend Spriddle opened the meeting with a long address about taking the children when they were young and beginning to train them for the work of the vineyard so that the sun in the late afternoon of life would not see their aged feet straying from the straight and narrow path, but instead would keep leading them onward and upward to that shining goal where some day we all hoped to meet in one blessed, unbroken circle and where peace and happiness reigned over all through the countless ages which are as the slipping of one grain of sand through an hourglass and which gives untold happiness to all who will but open up their hearts to the higher light. That's just the way he said it, and everybody nodded as if it was as plain as day.

Then Cromwell Oop delivered his speech again about Civic Righteousness, only it was longer, with more poetry in it, and more flights of oratory, and it showed more clearly than before that raising better babies was a civic duty, and that the city administration of Temptation should take a hand in it, and that he himself, if approached in the right way, might consider running for mayor on a better-babies platform. Let it be understood once for all, come what may, happen what might, he was for better, brighter, bigger babies.

You wouldn't have had any trouble in picking the judges. If you could have seen Doctor Grutch sauntering up and down the rows of baby buggies, culling his beard out thinner and thinner till just one hair was left for the point, peering at one baby through his gold-mounted spectacles, and glancing keenly at the next prodigy without his glasses, I guess you'd known who one of the judges was.

If you could have seen Mrs. Skim-



mins feeling of the babies' foreheads, and putting her finger in their mouths to see how many had come through, and giving advice to the nurses as to what was the best way of taking care of babies in hot weather, I reckon you wouldn't have had any trouble in putting your finger on the second dignitary.

Then if you could have seen big, fat Pud Ratch walking up and down with a nervous, worried look, showing that he appreciated the graveness and importance of his position, I know that it would have flashed over you in a breath who was the third person on whose broad and somewhat damp shoulders rested the authority to cast the third vote as to which was the most perfect baby in Temptation.

I think I said that the I. O. O. F. Hall was packed. But packed does not express it at all. No one would appreciate just how crowded and jammed it was until the *Trumpet* came out. It was the most élite, fashionable, and cultured audience that had ever gathered in our imperial city of Temptation, the *Trumpet* would explain.

A point chart was put into the judges' hands. The chart, which had been secured from Kansas City, listed fifteen heads under which points were to be scored:

	Points.
Height .....	8
Weight .....	8
Circumference of chest .....	6
Circumference of abdomen .....	6
Shape of forehead .....	5
Shape of ears .....	5
Bones of skull, spine, chest, limbs .....	10
Number of teeth .....	7
Tonsils .....	10
Quality of skin .....	5
Quality of muscles .....	5
Disposition .....	6
Energy .....	6
Facial expression .....	10
Attention .....	3
Perfect baby .....	100

The three judges, with the scoring

7

cards under their arms, walked down the row of buggies, checking the babies off. My, but it was exciting! Mrs. Skimmins would run her finger into the child's mouth, count its teeth, carefully wipe off its chin, and then the three judges would bend over their scoring cards. Pud Ratch would put the measuring machine on the child's head, hold it there one awful moment, then bend over his chart. It didn't do any good to crowd up and try to peek over his shoulder, for he would hold the chart tight against him.

Of course, no outside influence was to be brought to bear on the judges, any more than if they were a jury; and, most of all, the judges were not to know who the mothers were, so that every award should be made strictly on scored points. There wasn't any way for them to tell, except that when they were going by No. 27, they might see Mrs. Gooch hovering over it, pulling down its cap and straightening out its dress, or overhear old Mr. Culp saying that it looked just exactly the way Sylvia Gooch did when she was its age and when he used to rock her on his knees. But outside of that, the judges had not the slightest hint as to which baby was which.

One by one, the babies were eliminated until only two were left. From one end of the hall to the other the judges kept trotting back and forth, looking at the shape of No. 27's ears compared with those of No. 9.

I'm afraid I don't make it clear just how tense everything was—fever heat is the way they say it, I believe—just how everything was at fever heat. When Mrs. Culp looked at Mrs. Luke Childers that way—the right eyebrow going up higher than the other and hanging there for just the briefest second, no longer than a swallow hangs in the air to look down a chimney—Mrs. Childers knew that little Airdelle Ford had lost a point. When Mrs. Childers,



*The judges were still talking about disposition.*

who was standing by the side of Pud Ratch, bit her lips into a straight line, and you could see the blood rushing into the gray, then you knew that Yvette Gooch had lost a score.

Mrs. Gooch edged around so that, by leaning away over and pretending to be looking at the baby, she could see

through the corner of her eyes what Pud Ratch was checking up on his chart. Then we saw something was wrong. Mrs. Gooch's tongue darted out and moistened her lips. Then she turned and made out as if addressing Mrs. Childers, who lived in one of the Gooch houses:

"This ain't a beauty contest. Good looks don't count for everything in this, Mrs. Childers. The only looks is facial expression—ten points. I wonder if all the judges know that!"

Mrs. Skimmins, who wanted to get into society, turned her pencil end-to, and rubbed out something. Then Mrs. Gooch looked much easier.

"It says, 'Tonsils, ten points,'" said Pud Ratch, bending over No. 27. "All tonsils look alike to me. How many is a healthy youngster supposed to have?"

Doctor Grutch cleared his throat, as if making an address, and answered that there were two of these ovoid bodies, one on either side of the throat, between the pillars of the soft palate, and that they often became inflamed after infection by entrance of germs into the crypts and follicles.

Winnie Ford could not keep still. "Oh, I think Number Nine has a lot better tonsils. They're so much better filled out."

Everybody smiled; but, of course, Winnie could not by any chance know that No. 9 was her own little sister.

"Well," said Pud, who was willing to listen to reason, "les' call 'em even."

So No. 9 and No. 27 each scored ten points on tonsils.

"What does this mean here at the bottom," asked Pud, "where it says, 'Attention, three points'?"

Doctor Grutch explained, by going into physics, skimming lightly through metaphysics, and taking a dip into psychology, that "attention" meant how long a child would watch one thing. So Pud wagged a fat finger at No. 27, and held a watch. "Fifty-one seconds," he announced, and turned to No. 9. "Fifty seconds even," he exclaimed, working his watch back into his pocket.

Mrs. Ford's face tightened, and she drew her hand across her eyes, as if

brushing away a legal-looking document. Then out of the sky came hope with radiant wings in the form of Winnie.

"But Air—Number Nine paid lots closer attention," said Winnie, patting Pud Ratch's arm. "Didn't you see how bright her eyes were?"

So the contestants scored even on "attention."

In the awful stillness the judges began footing up the points. Only one point was yet to be decided—disposition. Pud bent over his chart as if it demanded every bit of his energy, constantly dipping his pencil into his mouth. In the oppressive silence, it flashed over the tense group that the score was even. No one said this; no one said a single word. It may have been the tightening of Mrs. Skimmins' mouth, or it may have been the way Mrs. Childers' tongue lashed at her dry lips, but anyway everybody knew that Airdelle and Yvette stood even on points.

Mrs. Gooch flushed violently to think that there should be such a close race between her darling Yvette and that Ford child. It would never do for Mrs. Gooch, the recognized social leader, to be beaten by the wife of the coal dealer. And when Yvette was dressed in silks and made such a picture! Calmly Mrs. Gooch studied the judges, one after another. She knew the history of every person in the hall, his weakness and his strength, and the strings that worked every heart in Temptation. She studied the strings.

Doctor Grutch, pulling his beard to a point, stood staring at the two children thickly; plainly she could not depend upon him. Pud Ratch sat bunched up in a chair, his attention alternating between the two contestants and his wadded handkerchief. Mrs. Gooch ran him through her mental sieve in a flash; plainly she had no hold on him. All her money and prestige meant nothing

to the proprietor of Ratch's Lightning Xpress.

Her eyes swung to Mrs. Skimmings, and bored her through for a moment; then a light danced away at the back of them like some one walking out of a cave with a candle. She knew the string. Slowly Mrs. Gooch turned aside to speak to Mrs. Spriddle, wife of the preacher, but Mrs. Gooch did not turn her head so far that the tail of her eye could not whip out at Mrs. Skimmings.

Then Mrs. Gooch spoke slowly: "Oh, by the way, Mrs. Spriddle, I meant to speak to you before," dropping her voice confidentially, and as if to shut out inquisitive and unrecognized ears, but making sure that it carried to the third judge. "In a day or two I shall issue cards for a musicale at my home on Friday next, and I want you to reserve the day for me, won't you?"

The question tacked on the end was altogether useless. It would be most convenient—in fact, Mrs. Spriddle would be delighted; but Mrs. Gooch's attention was not for the wife of the clergyman. When Mrs. Skimmings' head lifted, Mrs. Gooch smiled ever so little, but it was a friendly, inviting smile; a smile that told plainly enough that Mrs. Gooch was favorably disposed toward Mrs. Skimmings, and would always be if she had no reason to be otherwise.

Alex Thull came bustling in for the decision, so that the forms could be locked in the twinkling of an eye and the mighty press go thundering off the edition. That would be the way he would tell about it on the editorial page, explaining how the first extra in the history of Temptation was got out.

The Skimmings string was working. "Disposition in a baby is a pretty hard thing to judge," began Mrs. Skimmings slowly, "but, considering everything, I never saw a better-dispositioned child than Number Twenty-seven—"

Mrs. Ford reeled slightly, and put

her hand up to her head; slowly her face grew white, like new plastering as the morning begins to gray. But all eyes were for the commanding Mrs. Gooch—all save one pair. They were Winnie Ford's, and they were for her mother. Maybe Winnie knew about the long, legal-looking paper; maybe it was childish innocence that made her pluck Mrs. Gooch by the skirt and lead her into the lodge's dressing room. Scarcely any one noticed them going into the dressing room; least of all, Mrs. Ford, who was wetting her lips and looking dazedly at the judges.

The two were gone for several minutes. I don't know what Winnie told Mrs. Gooch; I don't know what they talked about; it may have been about that long, legal-looking document paper, but I don't know. I do know that when Mrs. Gooch came back, her dress was wrinkled across the lap as if some one had been sitting on it—some one about the size of Winnie—and there was a red mark on Winnie's cheek about the size of a person's mouth, as if somebody had given her a big, loving kiss. Still, I may be wrong. All I distinctly know is what I saw with my own eyes afterward, and that wasn't very much—not to people who don't live in Temptation and understand things.

When Mrs. Gooch came back—and Winnie, too, but most people didn't notice her—the judges were still talking about disposition. Mrs. Skimmings had just about won Pud Ratch over to her way of thinking, when Mrs. Gooch bent over No. 27 to straighten out its clothes. Then No. 27 began fretting, and crying, and kicking around enough to show that she had some of the Old Harry in her, while No. 9, at Mrs. Ford's elbow, kept smiling and stuffing her chubby fingers into her mouth. The more Mrs. Gooch tried to soothe No. 27, the worse she got, until Doctor Grutch was nervously pointing his mustache, and Pud Ratch

was looking helplessly toward the door.

When the vote was cast, Cromwell Oop had the honor of making the speech of announcement. Again he called attention to the progress that Civic Righteousness had made in the last hundred years, pointed out the great future that lay ahead of it, and openly hinted how much he could help along the undying cause if he were only made mayor of the fairest city that the golden god of the skies kisses on all its journey through the empyrean blue. And he closed his remarks—as the *Trumpet* put it, his few remarks—by announcing that No. 9 had won first prize, and would the mother of No. 9 please step forward and receive the award?

Proud and smiling, fully understanding why the judges had bestowed the prize upon by far the best baby entered in the contest, Mrs. Butch Ford stepped forward and received the check. Then you never saw such a scene. People rushed at her, congratulating her, and shaking hands, and asking her to call, and what she fed Airdelle, and did she believe in flannels, while Alex Thull, still a bit stupefied, rushed back just in time to get the headline changed from:

### SOCIETY LEADER WINS BETTER-BABY PRIZE.

Beautiful Little Yvette Gooch Easily Captures  
First Award in Greatest Contest  
in Temptation's History.

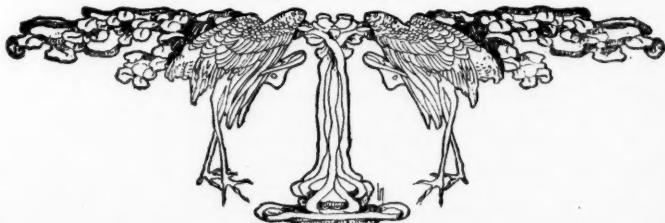
in twenty-four-point Cheltenham bold, to:

### FIRST PRIZE GOES TO MRS. FORD.

In the hubbub and excitement of getting the babies dressed and put in the buggies, and the last of the lemonade drank up, and the advertising pamphlets various concerns had sent on the care and diet of babies picked up and put in the buggies to be read at leisure, no one noticed Mrs. Skimmings, dismally putting on her hat in the corner; that is, no one except Mrs. Gooch, whose baby had lost in the contest.

The mother, whose very life was wrapped up in her child, went over, and in her most cordial manner said something to Mrs. Skimmings. I don't know what it was, but I think it was something about a week from Friday, though I may have been wrong. But, anyway, I do know that Mrs. Skimmings went downstairs as spry as a kitten, and on the way home dropped in to the Elite Millinery Emporium, and ordered a hat with a lot of feathers and lace that must have cost a mint of money, and told them there wasn't any hurry about delivering it, just so they got it around by a week from Friday.

Mrs. Ford went skipping home with the check and the child. And every time she hugged Airdelle to her breast, and looked down into her big blue eyes—her father's—she could easily understand why Airdelle had won, though she didn't have silks and satins to dress her in.





# SOME OBSERVATIONS ON SELF-SACRIFICE

-By-

Hildegarde Lavender

Author of "The Fountain of Youth," "Victorian," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

SHE is," remarked the sentimental member of the tea-table circle, in a voice rather overweighted with saccharine, "a dear, old-fashioned woman, ready, any time, to sacrifice her own interests for her family's."

The doctor, who happened to enter while this eulogy was in progress, gave a vulgar snort as she demanded tea of unusual strength.

"Sacrifice!" She proceeded to elucidate the snort as she unbuttoned her long coat, set her businesslike leather bag on the floor, took her tea, and found the easiest chair remaining unoccupied. "Sacrifice! I hate the word! It's the besetting vice of women—sacrifice. And we'll never amount to anything, as a sex, until we have shipped the absurd notion, thrown it completely overboard! Sacrifice, indeed!"

The doctor was allowed a certain almost masculine latitude in her views and in her expressions because she was held to be doing a man's work in the world. The sentimental sister looked grieved at both the opinions and the language, but before she could voice her gentle protest, some one who knew that the doctor's outbreaks usually denoted a recent experience, demanded:

"Why are you, inconsistent woman, so down on sacrifice to-day?"

"Inconsistent!" snapped the doctor, seizing upon the personal reference. "I am not inconsistent. I have never believed in self-sacrifice, have never practiced it, and consider it a misleading compass for steering one's ship through the troubled waters of this world."

"How about the summer you spent in town in the cancer laboratory instead of taking your customary two months' holiday in Maine?"

"Do you call that a sacrifice?" The doctor laughed at the uninstructed notion. "That was the joy of my life—the opportunity of my professional career! I was probably a selfish pig to take it—that beautiful chance—for I didn't see my sorrowing family all during the summer, and they count on seeing me summers. Sacrifice! Why, you don't know the first meaning of the word if you think that I sacrificed anything that season! It was a glorious wallow of self-indulgence!"

"Well, you sacrificed ease, coolness, recreation, and rest. It may have been for the sake of something dearer to you than any of those things—for the sake of some ideal better worth while than any of them. But it was a sacrifice—let us say of your lower nature to your higher, of your corporeal to your intellectual. But—aren't almost all evi-



dences of 'woman's besetting vice,' as you call it, similarly explainable?" The advocate of sacrifice sat back and looked at the doctor with the air of having scored rather neatly.

"No!" growled the lady of the instrument case. "Almost all evidences of 'woman's besetting vice' are evidences of her jellyfish quality, of her lack of backbone, of her need of perspective, of her absolute want of common sense."

"Go ahead," sighed the tea pourer resignedly.

"I've just come from a patient of mine on the East Side," answered the doctor, accepting the invitation. "She's a poor woman—a widow, with three children, the oldest a girl of sixteen, who works in a department store. She—the mother—is sick; she's booked for tuberculosis as sure as fate, if she doesn't take care of herself. She works at office cleaning, which isn't conducive to robust health. I got her into the Seaside Rest Home for a fortnight—I had to pull as many wires to accomplish it as if I had been a diplomat trying to prevent war with a hostile power. I found a temporary substitute for her in her work, and then I moved her down there, reluctant as she was to go. The children were old enough to shift for themselves

for two weeks, and the woman needed the change more than I can begin to explain to you.

"Well, this afternoon, having to visit the tenement house in which they live to see another patient—another blithering victim of the sacrificial school of thought, about whom I will tell you later—I observed that Mrs. X's kitchen door was open. I looked in as I went downstairs from my call—and there was my woman, back from Brighton after two days, standing beside a roaring fire and ironing a white muslin dress.



*"There was my woman, back from Brighton after two days, standing beside a roaring fire and ironing a white muslin dress."*



*The doctor, who happened to enter while this eulogy was in progress, gave a vulgar snort as she demanded tea of unusual strength.*

"She was horribly confused when I descended upon her, as I did, relentlessly and furiously, but she explained, to her own satisfaction, that poor Nellie was going to the Store Benefit Association's ball to-night, and had nothing to

wear, and so—quite as a matter of course—she had come home to do up her white swiss!

"Did you ever hear of such insanity in your lives? Of such vicious, maudlin sentimentality? And when I told her what I thought, the silly gump answered me, with shining eyes: 'The poor child has so little pleasure, doctor, that I hadn't the heart to rob her of this chance!' What do you think of that?"

The tea drinkers admitted that Mrs. X's self-sacrifice seemed to them injudiciously considered. Only one unregenerate member of the group was bold enough to say, sotto voce, that she would wager the dear woman was having more fun out of her breach of the doctor's discipline than if she had absorbed eggs, and milk, and ozone at the Brighton sanitarium for a month.

"Still," even this rebel added hastily, catching the belligerent gleam in the doctor's eyes, "I admit that the cause of her sacrifice scarcely seemed worth while!"

"Oh, I see so much of it!" sighed the doctor, accepting this as agreement. "The poor are so determinedly, besottedly insistent upon sacrifices—their women, I mean. There was the other patient I went to the tenement to-day to visit—a young woman, almost a bride. At any rate, she hasn't been married a year. I'm treating her for the bruises and general mangling her spouse inflicted upon her the night before last when he came home, ugly drunk. And do you think I can induce that poor, spiritless, silly thing to leave him, to make a complaint against him, to do anything to insure herself against such attacks whenever he may happen to have enough money to drink himself into a vile temper? I cannot!"

"She looks at me as pleadingly as she can through her inflamed, discolored eyes, and says: 'Oh, doctor, dear, he wouldn't have done it if he'd been him-

self! Sure, it's the first time he ever hurted me!' Well," said the doctor grimly, "I had the satisfaction of telling her that it wouldn't be the last—that no man existed self-sacrificing enough to forego the privilege of kicking a football which obligingly presented itself to his feet!"

"I suppose some of you sentimentalists feel a sympathy with her point of view? Why shouldn't a woman sacrifice for the sake of the man she loves? Why shouldn't she sacrifice the desire for a whole, unbruised body, for a pair of eyes that match, and for a nose that has not been sent askew by a blow? What are those but vanities, and what is vanity in comparison with the pleasure of the being you adore? Come, now, be honest! Don't you really feel like that, most of you?"

"Of course, you're talking arrant nonsense, doctor, dear," replied the upholder of the value of sacrifice. "Of course, wife beating has gone out among the more civilized classes, and nobody believes in its restoration or in submission to it. But that's a very different proposition from the one you are subtly trying to place before us—that a woman should not sacrifice any of her desires or vanities for the sake of the comfort of those whom she loves. As a matter of fact, she can't help it!"

"If it were only among the poor that this wretched idea of self-sacrifice prevailed," went on the doctor, "I shouldn't feel so hopeless about it all—for all the world is escaping poverty just as fast as it can. But women of the well-to-do classes have it, too. They sacrifice their careers, their intellects, their independence of judgment and action, upon the altar of the household.

"They sacrifice their taste for the sake of their children. How many women do you see going about in quite hideous things, after they have children, who used to love pretty things? How many women give up their music, their



"Oh, doctor, dear, he wouldn't have done it if he'd been himself! Sure, it's the first time he ever hurted me!"

reading, their little accomplishments and pleasures to give their children—what? An ease that will harm them, an exemption from the common life of the family that will be of incalculable injury by and by, a training that will estrange them from their parents even more cruelly than the mere difference in generation estranges?

"Oh, I tell you I am in earnest when I say that I think it is one of the most deplorable and dangerous doctrines in the world—that of the beauty of sacrifice. Let every one stand upon his own feet—or, more especially, on her own

feet—demand her own rights, live her own life—and the world will be a better place than it is at present!

"Children respect their fathers more than they do their mothers—why? Because their fathers aren't everlastingly sacrificing for them! Women respect men more than men respect women—Don't interrupt me with any of that ancient saint-and-angel-and-goddess guff! Look how men treat women, in their homes and more especially out of them! Men haven't half the respect for women that women have for men—and why? Because women sacrifice for men, are taught from their cradles to sacrifice for them.

"No, sir! A world of equals, all engaged in making the most

and best of themselves—that's the millennium toward which we aspire. Not a world of slavery masquerading as self-sacrifice."

When the silent tribute to the doctor's eloquence had lasted long enough to testify to the impression she had made, the upholder of the sacrificial theory asked gently: "How about the men who sacrifice their lives for others? How about the men who sacrifice gain and emolument for some intangible good—the lawyers who defend the poor and take no fees, the doctors who put themselves in danger of death to

discover the nature of some plague that ravages the race; the soldiers who give up their homes, and their comfort, and their lives for an ideal of patriotism? Are you going to abolish all of them in your new republic where every one is to stand on his own feet—even the babies, apparently?"

"But I have already tried to explain to you," snapped the doctor, "that those things are not sacrifices; they are self-indulgences, only on a somewhat higher plane than the ordinary self-indulgence. Nothing that a man or woman sacrifices out of interest or ambition in his profession is a sacrifice. It's a choice of a dearer thing in place of one not so dear. It advances him upon the path he is treading—it doesn't set him backward, as our womanly sacrifices do!"

"Still, you know," gently insinuated the defender of the ancient code, "there are even yet women who regard wifehood and motherhood as their profession!"

"Sentimental stuff!" snapped the doctor.

"There was a case in the place where I spent last summer," diffidently began a newcomer to the tea-table circle, "that bears on this discussion. I should like to hear what you all think of it. There was a young man there—a splendid fellow. It was on one of the Maine lakes, you know. He was rather wealthy, and he was determined to devote his money and his leisure and his energies to the world. I don't mean that he ever said anything so sloppy as that about his intentions; he merely said that he was more interested in the question of decent housing for the poor than in any other immediate problem. He was building a row or a block of model tenements on some property he owned on the East Side. He was going to live in one of them for a while. He was really a fine fellow—healthy, active, fond of wholesome pleasure, and anxious that every

one else should have a chance to have wholesome pleasure.

"Well—there was an excursion across the lake one day, and one of the native women had brought her entire brood, including a boy of nine who was morally defective, if not mentally. That nine-year-old managed to fall into the lake from the boat. And the young man I am telling you of jumped in after him. The boy grabbed him around the neck—and there was something queer about the lake. I don't know what; some curious whirlpool or suction hole—and they were both drowned. How does such a piece of sacrifice as that strike you? He didn't save the boy—and if he had, it would probably have been a misfortune. But he himself was lost—and for what?"

"To demonstrate," said the doctor grimly, "the absolute senselessness of the system under which we have been raised."

"That is true!" cried the clubwoman enthusiastically. "I know so many examples of futile sacrifice. None of them is quite so tragic as the one we have just heard. But—look at Nina F. Nina is a well-off person, mistress of her fortune, intelligent, educated—exactly the kind of woman we need in our civic affairs. But I can never induce Nina to undertake any sustained work. She says that she cannot undertake any regular job, so to speak, because her mother is old, and she spends every afternoon—practically every afternoon—with her. Driving, or walking, or tea-ing, or reading—anything to take Nina away from really interesting work that she might be doing.

"I have told her a dozen times that she can afford to hire a companion for her mother, and can give herself to the things that interest her, the things that are important to the city. I am as firm as the doctor, here, in my opposition to the sacrifice of one generation to the disabilities of another. Nina is in the



very prime of her powers—and, instead of using them for the general good, instead of doing something creative with them, she is sacrificing them to one old woman—she's reading aloud to a mother whose day is past, and who, in the bargain, can very well afford to pay some girl to read to her!"

"But you don't understand," heatedly cried the champion of the idea of sacrifice, "it isn't merely that your friend, Nina, is reading aloud, walking, or driving—which, of course, a paid companion could do as well. She's giving more than service—she's giving love and loving companionship! And those are things her mother has a right to exact."

"Why?"

"As a matter of common honesty, in the first place. As a decent return for love and loving companionship lavished upon her when her intellectual worth was nothing at all, and her society, from every point of view except that of love, must have been extremely tiresome! Are you going to wipe out the doctrine of honest repayment of debts along with the doctrine of the beauty of sacrifice, you two iconoclasts?"

"Of course, that is merely sentimental poppycock," grumbled the doctor. "Nina could love her mother without being a slave to her."

"Yes—just about as well as a mother can love her children while leaving them entirely to nurses and to governesses, and shutting them out of her own life! It's all nonsense to talk about love while you deny personal service, intimate companionship, close knowledge! Oh, you anti-sacrificialists have had your say. Now, listen to me!"

They all turned to listen to her, smiling a little at her unwonted vigor, but she did not notice the smiles.

"Sacrifice is the rock upon which not only religion, but civilization rests. We have all learned to subdue our more violently lawless, primitive desires. We have learned not to club our neighbor

with the first handy weapon when he differs from us or treads upon our toes; we sacrifice our strong, manly impulse to slay him. We sacrifice the desire to snatch our neighbors' husbands or our neighbors' wives for the gratification of our momentary desires. Not only family life, but community life, is built upon the idea of mutual sacrifices, and the whole nobility of existence comes from the sacrifice of the baser desires for the nobler ones—of the love of ease for the love of achievement, of our own pleasure for that of another person, of the stronger for the weaker, the richer for the poorer.

"Do you suppose that the persons who stop to question the worth—in actual dollars and cents, so to speak—of their sacrifices, ever make them? Do you suppose that the young man who lost a valuable life in the vain effort to save a life that gave no promise of value would have been the young man he was if he had been the sort to stop and question the worth of the child he was trying to rescue? Of course not! No—this world advances toward a better one by sacrifice.

"Some of us are injudicious in our sacrifices. Some of us sacrifice our health to iron our daughters' party clothes, and thus help to make them selfish and vain; and some of us sacrifice our self-respect to our husbands' temporary brutality, and thereby tend to make it permanent, perhaps. But there is one thing certain—we learn the lesson of sacrifice first in our personal relations. And until we all become wise and great enough to hold the whole world in our hearts and to make righteous sacrifices for its sake, we'd better keep right on making little sacrifices for the sake of our old fathers, and our seamstresses, and our vain young daughters, and our brothers, and our husbands. For it's getting the habit of sacrifice that counts. Will any one have more tea?"





# Husbands Warranted Housebroken

by  
Holman F.  
Day



ILLUSTRATED  
BY  
VICTOR PERARD

OLD Reuben Eastman came teetering down Scotaze's broad highway just as rosy-fingered dawn shook out of the windows of the east the stale curtains of the night.

Bulked on his back was a huge bull fiddle, and the snout of it stuck far over his head; he resembled some gigantic insect moving along the road.

In his hand, despite the fact that the golden light of morning flushed the skies, he carried a lighted lantern. The world still looked dim and shadowy to him, for blue-glass goggles masked his eyes, and the bows were firmly lashed behind his head with stout cord. By the manner in which the goggles were tied on it seemed likely that other hands than Reuben Eastman's had done this job.

It was plain that Reuben Eastman carried something else beside what has been enumerated; slangy folks call it "a load." His wabby gait told the sad story. He tacked from side to side of the road, and every now and again his knees bent under him, and he gave little sprints and nearly tumbled on his nose before he could recover himself.

"Isha turrible night to be out in!"

confided Mr. Eastman to himself. "Earshquake every few minush that nigh knocks me down, and not a star to be seen. 'S lucky I brought my lantern and am as sure-footed as a goat. But isha turrible night, jussa same!"

He toddled on his way with increasing difficulty.

"Mosha earshquakes seem to be right under this road," he muttered, after a longer run than usual and a most precarious slide for life. "Thish town don't pay attention enough to building solid roads. Shall speak about it to sel-ick—to sel-ock—to selectmen. I ain't going to take any more chances."

He held up his lantern and sighted about his vicinity as best he could. He found himself in front of Cap'n Aaron Sproul's house, a mansion that was well known to all of Scotaze.

"I'll go crosh lots to my house," Mr. Eastman informed himself. "I guesh earsh must be thicker there than it is in the road."

He swung in through the gate.

Two minutes later, Cap'n Sproul leaped out of his bed, awakened by a most ominous crashing. He took a

horrified glance out of his chamber window which overlooked his garden.

He spied something that resembled a Brobdingnagian squash bug. It was a rear view of Mr. Eastman, and the cap'n could see only the bulk of the great fiddle, the long snout, and the ends of two legs below.

Sleep was still in the cap'n's eyes, and the half stupor of dreams was in his soul.

"For mercy's sake, Aaron, what is it?" asked his frightened wife, awakened by his half shout of amazement.

The intruder was smashing his way along a row of cucumber frames, a big foot plunking out a pane of glass at every step.

"I've seen a lot of different kinds of insects in that garden," muttered the cap'n, "but that one takes the rag off'm the royal to'gal'n's'l yard."

He pulled on his trousers in a hurry, and ran downstairs.

He intercepted Mr. Eastman in that gentleman's return down the line of the cucumber frames.

"What the blazes you doing here in my garden, you—your cussfired old lightning bug?" yelled the cap'n, having reference to the lantern that Mr. Eastman carried.

His caller halted, glass tinkling about his feet, and held up the lantern in order to survey the cap'n's face.

"Cap'n Sproul, ain't thish an orful night to be out in? And I never see ice form like this in May before. Mussa froze every plant you got."

The cap'n knew Mr. Eastman, and understood Mr. Eastman's lax habits in the matter of stimulants.

"You drunken old fush of a fiddler, I'll have you in jail for this job!"

He expended some of his fury by cuffing the inebriate's ears, and yanked off the goggles.

"It's the end of the world!" shrieked the fiddler, blinking up into the heavens.

"Sun has popped out shining in the middle of the night."

When Cap'n Sproul twisted his hand into Eastman's collar and began to yank him along, he had no definite idea as to what he would do with this trespasser. Merely to kick him into the highway seemed to be too lame a punishment.

He decided to take him to the village lockup.

"You never had a cent in your life to settle for damages you've done in this town, you old boozier!" raged the cap'n. "You come along! I'll get it out of your hide, even if I can't get it out of your pocket."

The buffets his head had received had jarred the fiddler's wits back to a more or less normal condition. The sunlight sobered him somewhat.

"It's a turrible thing, Cap'n Sproul, to send a man to jail for a thing he didn't intend to do. And I've got a poor wife to support."

"She takes in washings to support you, you old fiddling fuddydud! She'll be better off with you in jail."

"I didn't know it was your glass. I was like an infant lost in the wilderness. I'll pay for the damage."

"How?" This was more of a snarl than an inquiry. The cap'n kept jerking his prisoner along.

"I'll give you my fiddle."

"What do you expect I could use that blasted thing for?"

"You can sit and play on it, and soothe your feelings."

"When you see me soothing my feelings by hum-strumming on a bull fiddle I'll be doing it in a padded cell. Come, hiper along, here! I think an insane horsepittle is a better place for you than a jail will be."

"I must have enemies," bleated Mr. Eastman. "They kept feeding me lick at that dance I was playing for—crowding the demon rum down my throat—and I begged 'em not to do it."

"Look here, Eastman, I know you! You'd rather take your fiddling wages in rum than in ready cash. You're an old soak."

"But it was an enemy who tied them goggles onto me and made me think it was night. If I hadn't had 'em on, I wouldn't have tromped onto your cucumber frames. You ought to blame the enemy that done it to me."

A new notion came to Cap'n Sproul just then. It fitted with his grim humor of the moment. Putting this spineless offender in jail seemed to be dignifying the offense too much. They were passing the village pound, a walled inclosure provided for the detention of stray cattle.

He whirled Eastman off the highway and thrust him into the inclosure.

"You're just about of as much account as a breachy steer," he informed his captive. "You belong in the pound. You stay in there and meditate."

He banged the wooden door shut and secured it with a Dutch lock—a prop of stout plank.

"What will I do for vittles?" wailed Mr. Eastman.

"Get down and eat grass—it will be good for you. And don't you dare to holler to anybody to let you out. If any one offers to do it, you tell 'em I've given you orders to stay."

"I think this is an outrage," Mr. Eastman ventured to declare.

"Think! You only think you're thinking. You never thought in your whole life. If I find you outside of this pound when I come back, I'll take that bull fiddle for a batstick and whale you all over this town!"

The cap'n's wife met him at the kitchen door, her bacon fork poised in her hand, worry in her eyes.

"Mrs. Eastman is in there waiting for me to pick up the washing," she explained, in an undertone. "I haven't told the poor thing—I didn't know what

to tell her—I didn't know what you had done with him."

The anxiety in her face and tones indicated that she believed her irascible husband had dealt in some savage and summary fashion with the assailant of that beloved garden.

"What have you done with him?" she asked.

"Pounded him."

"Yes, I saw you doing that on the way down the road; but what—"

"Can't you understand plain talk? I put him in the pound—the cattle pound. He belongs there."

He stamped past her into the kitchen.

Mrs. Eastman sat there—a thin woman, with wispy hair and the generally mournful demeanor of a hungry cat.

"I hate to talk strong to any woman about her husband," stated the cap'n, plunging into the middle of his business with the energy that his indignation prompted, "but I want to say to you, Mis' Eastman, that the critter that's tied to you in the holy bonds of matrimony is a dog-goned old piece of catgut that ought to be rubbed with his own rosum and fiddled across the top of a rail fence till there ain't nothing left of him."

"I ain't standing up for him one mite, Cap'n Sproul. I used to—I used to have hopes about him. But I ain't got none no more. He ain't no help to me. All he does is go round nights to dances and toom-toom on that old fiddle for fools to cavort, and then come home at break o' day like an old cat, and sleep till night again. And he don't earn no money doing it—or, if he does, he spends all he makes for lickin', the nasty stuff."

"Finding that you agree with me about him saves argument, marm," said the cap'n, hanging up his hat and making ready for breakfast. "I simply want to tell you that he come into my garden this morning on his way home



*"What are you scratching the back of that infernal old tomtom for—letting out them yowls?" demanded the cap'n.*

and strammed up and down my cucumber frames and smashed nigh all the glass in 'em. A nice bill of damages he has run up!"

She did not display surprise or any particular emotion. It was evident that the vagaries of her errant husband could no longer astonish her. She rubbed her toil-reddened hands over her knees. The one gaunt, ragged feather in her faded black hat trembled.

"I reckon I'll have to scrub for you

till I pay for what he done, Cap'n Sproul. He hain't got nothing of his own to pay with."

"We'll let it rest as it stands, Mis' Eastman, just now. I haven't made up my mind just what I'll do with him. He's in the village pound."

Her dim eyes flashed a little.

"He belongs there," added the captain, with decisive tone. He pulled up to the table. "Sit down with us and have a snack of breakfast, marm."

"He's wuthless, I know, and I have agreed with you, Cap'n Sproul, but I swanny, I think it's tough on me as a woman and tough on my reputation in this town to have a husband put into the pound like he was a stray dog."

"Breachy steer was what I called him," returned the cap'n, with composure.

"The village lockup is too dignified for him. It would kind of disgrace the place for real criminals if I had put him in there. Now, you'd better pull your chair right up and have something to eat—and then you and I will consider this thing on a full stomach. Folks are apt to be snappy and short-tempered before breakfast."

"I do want you to try my Sally Lunns, Mrs. Eastman," put in the cap'n's gracious little wife. "Take this chair. Slip off your bonnet."

The appetizing odors from that breakfast were too much for the resistance of the hungry woman; but she remained gloomy, and occasionally she gave the cap'n a glance that showed that she was dwelling on the ignominy of a pound as a retreat for the husband of a woman who tried to be respectable. But she ate, and, thus fortified, sat back and waited for what the cap'n might have to say, now that his stomach was full.

He lighted his pipe and leaned back in his chair and ruminated.

After a time he brought a big book from the sitting room and pored above it, hunting in the index and whipping pages to the contents.

"It's law—law—law all the time, and the poor folks always get the worst of it," ventured Mrs. Eastman, breaking the long silence. "I s'pose that big book tells you just what's to be done—but I wisht you'd read me that part where it says a man can be put into the village pound if he gets drunk and tromps on cucumber frames. In case anybody twits me, I can say that the law says so, and that it ain't a special slur on my fambly to have you put Reuben in."

"I'm looking up another kind of law, marm. I say again to you, he's in the pound because he belongs there, and it was my best judgment to put him there. The both of you better be thankful that I didn't do anything worse. Now, you put on your bonnet and come along with me."

He laid the big book on the table and picked up some scraps from the breakfast leftovers, wrapping a newspaper around the food. Then he put the book under one arm and the parcel under the other and started out. The woman followed him.

"Don't be afraid of Aaron, Mrs. Eastman," counseled Mrs. Sproul, whispering to her at the threshold and patting her arm. "He barks pretty

loud, and it's awful to have a nice garden get all mallywhacked up, as ours has been; but he'll do something to help you—I'm sure he will. He has been thinking awful hard."

"It has seemed to me that he has been thinking up something turrible to do to Reuben," confided Mrs. Eastman—and then she hurried to catch up with the grim controller of her destiny.

Several boys and men had climbed up the wall of the pound, and were peering into the inclosure. Nobody had molested the plank that was propped against the door. As the cap'n and the woman approached, they could hear the melancholy booming of the bull fiddle; it was plain that this sound had attracted the attention of the folks who fringed the wall.

Cap'n Sproul kicked down the Dutch lock and went in, the wife at his heels.

"What are you scratching the back of that infernal old tomcat for—letting out them yowls?" demanded the cap'n. "You ought to be ashamed to attract folks here to see you. You're disgracing your wife."

"You didn't have no business putting me in here," complained the prisoner. "The more I think of it, it ain't lawful. And my feelings was so hurt, when I begun to think it over, that I had to do something to soothe 'em."

"You go ahead and soothe yourself with this grub I've brought," commanded the cap'n.

Mr. Eastman seemed to be entirely willing to lay aside his music at the sight of food, and he munched, shifting watery gaze from the cap'n to his wife. He manifested some alarm when Cap'n Sproul opened the big book and began to study it, his spectacles pulled well down to the end of his nose.

"How long has it been since this husband of yours supported you, marm?"

"He hain't done nothing to speak of for ten years except fiddle for dances in that mis'able old Harmonic Ostrichy

—or whatever they call it. He don't bring a cent home nowadays—just sneaks home and sleeps while I'm rubbing my knuckles off at the washtub. And he used to be one of the best harness makers that ever jabbed an awl or waxed an end!"

"Knows a good trade, hey?"

"Yes; and he could make good money at it if he'd only go to work."

"I'm an artistic musicianer, and stitching harness for old hosses ain't my bent—and I've found it out," insisted Mr. Eastman.

"And I've found out something, and it's about what I want to know," retorted Cap'n Sproul. "I haven't served as selectman, overseer of the poor, and high sheriff of this county without knowing something about the law on certain points." He patted the flat of his hand on the open book. "And there are some little points hidden away in the pauper and nonsupport law that everybody ain't familiar with. Say, you folks up there on the wall, you listen to what passes between me and Fidler Eastman," he called.

"There ain't going to anything pass," declared that beleaguered individual. "I'm going to rise for my rights. I ain't going to stay here in this pound—no law can keep me here. Bring in your bill for damages—and it will be settled."

"Yes, by your wife working night and day at a washtub. You ain't going to get out of this thing in any such style, Eastman. Will you go to work at your trade and support your wife?"

"I won't let any man stick his nose into my fambly affairs."

"I ask you a plain question: Will you go to work making harness?"

"No, sir."

"Note answer, gents, and remember same. Will you support your wife so that she won't have to take in washings?"

"Washing is her business, and I'm going to let her tend to it."

"Then you stand guilty of being a nonsupporter, and have so declared before witnesses. Pick up that fiddle and come along."

"Where?"

"You ain't going to do anything terrible to Reuben, are you, Cap'n Sproul?" pleaded the wife.

"I'm going to straighten him out for your sake, and make a man of him, and I expect you to obey orders and keep your mouth shut," snapped the grim god of the machine.

Mr. Eastman had not the courage to resist this tyrant, who had already manhandled him so ferociously that day.

"I do this under protest," he whined, "and will sue for being kidnaped."

Cap'n Sproul, escorting his captive, was followed down the street by a sizable retinue of interested citizens. He led the parade into the post office, and called on the postmaster to officiate in his capacity of justice of the peace.

"This woman takes oath before you," stated Cap'n Sproul, "that her husband has been a nonsupporter of her for going on ten years. He has declared before these witnesses that he doesn't intend to support her. So let the law take its course."

"I don't know but you understand more about the law than I do," confessed the postmaster justice, "seeing that I'm a layman and you've held office as sheriff, and et cetera. What do you want me to do with him? I know that Reub Eastman is a mighty worthless cuss, and I'll act just as you want me to—according to the statutes made and provided."

"Law says that any man who is guilty of willful nonsupport of his dependent family may be committed to jail by a magistrate duly qualified—there to remain till he wakes up to a realizing sense—or words to that effect."

"That's a blamed good law, and I'm





*He led the parade into the post office, and called on the postmaster to officiate in his capacity of justice of the peace.*

glad to hear of it," stated the layman dispenser of Scotazé justice. "Therefore, I send the to-wit and aforesaid Reuben Eastman to jail in the county of Cuxabexis SS., as they say, and may God have mercy on his soul—if I'm using the right legal phrase."

"It don't matter much about the style of language, so long as you order him committed," said the cap'n.

Mr. Eastman was visibly overwhelmed and terrified by this sudden exhibition of the power of the law.

"How long have I got to stay in jail?" he bleated.

"I ought to make it for life," declared the postmaster, "for I know what kind of a cheap critter you are. What does the law say can be done, Cap'n Sproul?"

"Law allows a sentence of a year."

"Then I'll make it a year."

"But if I'm locked up in jail for a

year, I couldn't support nobody, even if I wanted to. It may be law, but it ain't gospel, not by a blamed sight! I won't be worth nothing, locked up in jail."

"Oh, yes, you will," announced the cap'n, patting the big book. "But that's another chapter, continued in our next. Constable Nute, take this prisoner in charge, and meet me at the railroad station this afternoon with him, ready to take the down train."

He took firm grip of Mrs. Eastman's arm and started away with her.

"I must say good-by to him." She began to whimper.

"Shut up, and come along back to your house," cried the cap'n. "You're going right down to the shire with him and me on that train. That'll be the next chapter, and there ain't nothing in it to shed tears about."

As they were walking back along the

street in the direction of the cap'n's house, he intercepted some of the frightened side stares she gave him.

"Marm," he growled, "you seem to run of a general idea that we're going to take that husband of yours down to jail and give him the rack, hot pitch, the thumbscrews, and seven varieties of the Portygee fandango. Well, we ain't."

"But now I won't have no husband. He wa'n't much, I'll admit; but he was something. I'll have to live a lone woman."

"Marm, I ain't much of a hand to tell all comers my plans in advance. But seeing that you're an interested party, and that everything is now moving nicely and can't be trigged, I'll make an announcement that ought to be for your general satisfaction. When I was high sheriff of this county, I had full right to make prisoners work for the county or could let 'em out to parties that contracted for their labor—that is, to parties that employed 'em within the jail premises. There's a shop at the jail where prisoners work for contractors, making heels for cheap shoes. But in the law there's a little dinkledido provision that lets a sheriff use his own judgment about the work of certain kinds of prisoners—and a nonsupporting loafer of a husband comes under the certain-kind head. Now, don't you worry one mite about what's going to happen down at the shire this afternoon. I like to see a hard-working, honest woman get used right. I'll stand behind you, pay all bills, and that sheriff is a good friend of mine. I think you're going to see a whole lot of fun."

"There ain't any fun left in this world for me, Cap'n Sproul."

"Well, if you don't see fun in what's going to happen, you'd better take your sense of humor to a good operator and have the cavity in it filled," advised the cap'n crisply.

Mrs. Sproul made the apprehensive

wife quite presentable by loaning her a hat and some clothing for her trip to the shire, and when Mr. Eastman's eyes fell on her at the railroad station he appeared to feel greatly ill at ease.

"Marm," the cap'n advised her in low tones, as they approached the constable and the prisoner, "I want you to put on some airs to go with them clothes. Straighten up. Look down on him. Make him feel meeching. Act out as if you was boss, and knew it. It's going to come in handy later. You'd better begin to practice."

"Roxanny," pleaded Mr. Eastman, "be you going to let 'em persecute me? Take back what you said about my not supporting you. Then they can't jug me. And after this I'll go get your washings and deliver 'em back for you. And if I'm feeling right mornings, and ain't out too late, I'll turn the wringer for you. Ain't that using you right?"

The cap'n pinched her arm.

"You don't know how to use anybody right—and I'm waking up," she declared. "Instead of working and giving me decent clothes to wear, you loaf and make me run to the neighbors to borrow things so that I won't be shamed and disgraced, now that I'm taking my first ride on the steam cars in ten years. And you ain't even paying my fare. You ain't paying your own fare. Now I hope you'll get what's coming to you!"

"I suppose what you're coming along for is to make faces at me through the bars when I lie on my narrow cot and eat dry bread. I wish I could die, and be out of my misery."

"Seeing that it's so much of an effort for you even to wish, I'd advise you to save your strength so as to wish that good and hard a little later," suggested the grim cap'n.

"That's it—everybody wants to squodge the poor man down in this world—threaten him, persecute him! I ain't ever done nothing to you, Cap'n

Sproul, except break a little glass, after enemies had fixed me so I didn't know. What be you going to have done to me? I don't like the way you look at me."

"I don't blame you," declared the cap'n, "if my face expresses my feelings to any considerable extent."

"And even *you* are holding your head high, and lording it over your own husband!" complained Mr. Eastman, quailing under the stare of his wife.

"That ain't a mark to what's coming," was the cap'n's baleful prognostication.

On the ride to the shire town, Mr. Eastman sat beside the constable, and his wrinkled brow showed that he was much taken up with his uncomfortable speculations.

"I think there's more to this than just sending me to jail," he informed the officer. "You could take me to jail all alone. But there's something underhand, seeing that Cap'n Sproul is bringing my wife along."

The constable was not reassuring.

"I think there's something special on," he told Mr. Eastman. "When I see that expression on Cap'n Sproul's face, I know that he is meditating on something else than just how his string beans are coming along. He's a great operator when he gets to work on a thing."

"Maybe he's going to have me tied up and licked with a catterninetails."

"It ain't done in this State. And that would be too coarse work for Cap'n Sproul. What he has got planned for you, if I'm any judge, will rasp you more than a licking."

"I'm a good mind to jump out through this window and end it all," gasped the unhappy prisoner.

"Go ahead," advised Constable Nute serenely. "It will save the county the expense of boarding you. But I know you won't do it, Reub. And I ain't going to flatter you by holding you in."

That scornful estimate of him per-

ceptibly lowered Mr. Eastman's spirits to the lowest point. He stole looks at his wife, and when her eyes met his, she frowned at him as if she realized that at last she had the upper hand in that family; her borrowed finery had given her more self-respect.

Cap'n Sproul confided no more of his plans to Mrs. Eastman. He led his personally conducted party up the streets of the shire town and left them in the sheriff's outer office, while he held converse with that puissant gentleman, who had greeted him with great affability.

When they came out, the sheriff scowled on Mr. Eastman with official disfavor, and took the commitment papers from the hands of the Scotaze constable.

"You understand," he informed the cringing prisoner, "that the cricket who has fiddled all summer gets to be an ant, and a mighty busy one, as soon as he arrives here. Did you ever make heels for shoes?"

"No, sir."

"Can you saw and split a cord of wood a day?"

"I don't believe I could."

"I'll back him up in that," asserted Mrs. Eastman, with much tartness. "I've had to fit my own wood for my kitchen fire."

"We don't need a fiddler in this place—a bucksaw is the only fiddle we allow. We call it a gashing fiddle," stated the sheriff, with a glint of humor that promptly disappeared when he looked at Mr. Eastman again. "I am told that you are a harness maker by trade. We don't run any harness shop. The law allows me, in the case of a prisoner who is here for no capital crime, to use my best judgment in letting him out to work for responsible parties, where he will show best returns for the county. I usually dispose of the services of such prisoners by



*"You don't know how to use anybody right—and I'm waking up," she declared. "Now  
poor man down in this world—*



*I hope you'll get what's coming to you!" "That's it—everybody wants to squodge the threaten him, persecute him!"*

auction. The meeting will please come to order."

The sheriff was brusque and brisk, and events moved so swiftly from then on that Eastman's brain reeled.

Cap'n Sproul, passing to a chair, whispered to Constable Nute: "Bid fifty cents, and go no higher."

The constable did not understand, but he was in the habit of taking orders from Cap'n Sproul, ever since the days when the cap'n had been selectman.

"We have here one Reuben Eastman, committed to this jail for one year on the ground of being idle and improvident, and on complaint of his wife, Roxanna Eastman, who accuses him of nonsupport. Acting for the county of Cuxabexis, I have decided to let him out to the highest bidder. Bidder will pay to me each week amount so bid, and will be allowed, after usual fees, to make such profit off said prisoner as his efforts may yield. Prisoner to be under surveillance by a party delegated by me, with full powers to act in my stead, and enforce obedience and industry. I say, ladies and gentlemen, we have here one Reuben Eastman. What am I offered, per week, for his services?"

"Fifty cents," bid Constable Nute.

Mr. Eastman glared when this estimate of his value was delivered.

"Fifty cents bid—do I hear sixty? Sixty—can't you make it seventy-five, gentlemen?"

There was no sound, and Mr. Eastman grew purple with suppressed emotion.

"I realize that this person has not been showing earning capacity for some time," acknowledged the sheriff, "but I believe that somebody with real vim could make him hustle. Do I not hear sixty cents—why, ladies and gentlemen, that's only ten cents a day."

"I'll act as attorney for Mrs. Roxanna Eastman, and take a chance,"

stated Cap'n Sproul. "I bid sixty cents."

"Do I hear any more bids?" The sheriff did not coax. "Then I declare Reuben Eastman sold——"

"Humped-up Hosea!" squealed Mr. Eastman. "I ain't going to allow myself to be peddled out for sixty cents a week—no, sir! I'm a free American citizen!"

"No American citizen stays free unless he obeys the law, Eastman. You have been regularly committed to jail. I have disposed of you to the highest bidder! Captain Sproul, as attorney for that bidder, after you have filed the regular bond required in this case, you may remove the prisoner."

Cap'n Sproul attended to that formality there and then.

"Seeing that this man is to be taken to Scotaze, there to be employed by the bidder, I will appoint you my personal representative, Captain Sproul, to make him obey all orders, toil the regular hours set for him, and conduct himself in such a manner that he will realize constantly that he is a prisoner, under the thumb of this sovereign county."

"I'll see that he feels the thumb," stated Cap'n Sproul. "I reckon I know just about what this particular case needs."

He shook hands with the sheriff, and led his party away.

That night he installed Mr. Eastman in the latter's home, and laid down the law.

"You understand, Eastman, that you're a prisoner. There ain't any fooling about this. Don't you dare to step across the threshold of this house without permission. You want to remember that prisoners ain't out running around the country nights. Abed 'at nine—lights out. I shall keep a sharp eye on you. And to-morrow there'll be a sign hung on the outside of this house. It will read: 'Harness Making



Promptly Attended To. Mrs. Roxanna Eastman, Manager."

The unhappy victim hopped up and down and cracked together his little fists in an ecstasy of rage.

"I won't—I won't—you can't make me!" he yelled. "You can't hire me out to my own wife. I'll be dog-dinged if I'll set here and jab an awl, with her bossing me and taking all I earn. You can't make me do it."

"As highest bidder, marm, you have just heard this insubordination," stated the cap'n. "As his keeper, appointed by the high sheriff, I shall have to act. I have been high sheriff, myself, and I know exactly what would be done if the main squeeze was here in person. Give me a good hunk of clothesline."

The wife, her jaws set, entering fully into the spirit of this proposed regeneration of a delinquent husband, brought the line, and the cap'n trussed up his captive, whom he had been holding in the clutch of a hand that had been toughened by many years on ship-board.

"Solitary confinement for to-night," ordered the cap'n. "Got an apple bin in your cellar, Mrs. Eastman? Very well—that will do nicely for a dog hole. Bread and water and the dog hole till he comes around to understand that a prisoner can't tell the high muckamucks of this shrievalty that he'll do just as he wants to."

Mr. Eastman was cowed by the manner in which Cap'n Sproul looked at him as he hustled him down the cellar stairs.

"You want to understand that this ain't any persecution, my man. It's all backed by the law, and if I have to hosswhip you to bring you to your milk, I'll be perfectly justified. This is serious business. There'll be no fooling. I'll be over in the morning, and you'd better plan to be pretty mighty soovable."

"I'll stay here and die," announced

Mr. Eastman, from the gloom of the apple bin. "I see what the plot is—it's to kill me off. I'll show you just how stuffy I can be."

But when Cap'n Sproul called next morning, he found his prisoner in a less defiant frame of mind.

"He began to beg the minute your back was turned," reported Mrs. Eastman. "He thought, probably, that he could wopse me around his finger the same as he used to do. He wanted me to let him loose. But I didn't dare to do it after what the sheriff ordered."

"It would be pretty serious business for you, marm, if you let a prisoner escape. You must remember that you're in a ticklish position, and that I've given a bond."

Mrs. Eastman set her toil-reddened hands on her hips and jutted her jaw with the most determined look she had exhibited in years.

"If there wasn't no sheriff, and no bond, and nothing else, I'd have kept him there, Cap'n Sproul. I've woke up all of a sudden. I realize how I have been abused. And I tell you it's a pretty nice feeling for a woman to know that she has got the upper hand. If I don't make him walk Spanish from now on, I'll know the reason why."

"Marm, I'm proud of you as my assistant turnkey."

"I was nothing and nobody before. He could thumb his nose at me. But says I to myself last night, when he begged and threatened, 'Mis' Eastman, you've got the whole county behind you in this thing.' And when he got too obstreperous, I went down and throwed a pail of water on him. And I knowed the county would back me up in what I done."

"You've got the natural instincts of a first-class jailer," declared the cap'n. "Whenever prisoners started a riot in the county jail, I used to turn the hose on 'em."

"Furthermore, Mis' Adoniram Jud-

kins was over this morning to ask me what all this touse about Reuben was, and I took her down and showed him to her. She's got a shiftless, wuthless old towser for a husband, and she wants to try the same operation on him. And I reckon that just as soon as the news of this thing gets spread around town, other women will join right into the movement. It beats getting a bill of divrose."

"No doubt of it," agreed the cap'n.

"I think you're the smartest and knowingest man I ever heard tell of, Cap'n Sproul."

"Thank ye, marm."

"I told Mis' Judkins so, and she wants you to come over and start her in right with that case of hers."

"Look here, marm, I ain't guaranteeing to housebreak all the husbands in this town."

"But we're looking to you, and I don't see how you're going to back out."

The cap'n rubbed his nose and reflected.

"What's his general state of mind this morning?" he asked, pointing his finger at the floor to indicate the location of Mr. Eastman.

"He's supple, Cap'n Sproul. He says that if you'll help him to get a little stock to start on, he'll go to work making harness. I brought his old sign down from the attic this morning and

scrubbed it off, and the minute he gets the leather, I'll nail that sign onto the corner of the house and see that he keeps busy."

Cap'n Sproul went down into the cellar and inspected the prisoner with interest. Mr. Eastman exhibited a meekness that was most encouraging.

"You could fool with your wife, and fool with yourself, and fool with the neighbors, Eastman, but you can't fool with the county," stated his mentor. "Law is a wonderful thing. You understand now that it is, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I'll cut you loose, and let you get to work. And if you show the right kind of spirit from now on, your manager and I will see what we can do about getting you a pardon when the time comes."

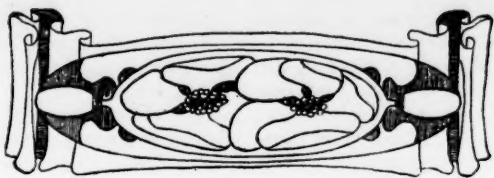
It was not necessary for Cap'n Sproul to proceed to extremes with the other delinquent husbands of Scotaze.

Mr. Eastman, toiling with awl and waxed end, and on exhibition for all to see who passed that way, served as a sufficiently horrible example of what the law could do to a man.

And Mrs. Eastman always had an effective way of ending arguments and quelling insurrection. She pointed her finger at her husband, and concluded her harangue with this:

"And furthermore, I've got the county behind me!"





## The Rarest Thing

By Nalbro Bartley

Author of "Shadows," "The Smell of the Lamp," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROLLIN CROMPTON

**D**ON'T grow old! If you're not invited to picnics any more, take your hard-boiled egg and go out to the well curb to eat it!"

The gilt print of the postal-card motto made Miss Crane reach for her working glasses. Her thin hand felt nervously among the pile of notes that she had left beside her typewriter. She found the steel spectacles and put them on deliberately. A long time ago, she had learned to do things deliberately, even though she might be inwardly seething with emotion. After she had adjusted them, she looked up at the mocking little postal card that some one had pinned over her desk during lunch time. She was conscious that the office boy was snickering in the background, and that Gladys May, the stenographer to the junior partner, was asking what the joke was all about.

"Don't grow old!" Miss Crane swallowed hard, and squared her delicate little shoulders. There was a faded, wistful prettiness about her, a sort of hopeless expression such as a tropical bird attains after it has been caged in the North for a few winters. It was an acknowledgment of the fact that her womanhood had been wasted in the big iron office; that her pretty daintiness had been slowly dimmed through

constant association with the careless, rushing business world; that her feminine craving for a home had been slowly piloted into the tragic channel of business correspondence and keeping her typewriter well oiled, into having the one neat desk in the concern and the only available ink eraser. This was what had offered itself to the little stenographer in place of an accepted woman's life, with children clinging to her skirts.

Twenty-four years ago, when she had been barely sixteen, she had come into Bronson & Lambert's employ in the capacity of errand girl, a feminine version of office boy. The firm had been Riker & Hodges then, Bronson and Lambert being merely clerks. A few years later, when freckled-faced archdemons, with toothaches and dying relatives, had crowded her out, she had been tolerated with the understanding that she go to night school and learn stenography.

One long winter of night school and nine-hour working days had resulted in her promotion to a notched typewriter desk, with a rebuilt machine completely out of alignment. At this time, Miss Crane had never doubted that her business life would soon end; that, in the ordinary manner in which things hap-

pen, some one would come into her narrow world and take her out of it.

She had lived a nun's existence. Her aunt, who had raised her, had died the third year that she had been in the company's employ. Since then she had lived at one of the boarding homes for working girls, a place where kindly, inquisitive women congregate monthly to spot holes in the table linen or the pressing need of a new hall carpet. She paid her weekly stipend with the regularity of a seven-day clock. Her tiny room, high up in the big brick building, boasted of a folding cot bed, a golden-oak dresser, two chairs, and a tiny table. On the table were a stiff cloth Bible and two magazines, long out of print. Every month the board saw that these magazines were changed, and others, a little less out of print, substituted. There was a neat engraving on the wall, which she had won in a contest for securing members for a Bible class, and two photographs of her parents, whom she had never known.

On the golden-oak dresser were a white towel cover and half a dozen little personal belongings such as all women invariably acquire, whether they are in a leper colony or a theatrical dressing room—a bottle of violet toilet water, a blue satin pincushion, a hatpin holder, a cheap manicure set, combs and an "ideal" hairbrush, some lily-of-the-valley talcum powder, a framed photograph of the president of the home, and a match box.

Downstairs there was the big, bare dining room, run on the cafeteria plan, where she ate her hurried rolls and coffee in the morning and her tea at night. There was, too, the sitting room, which was always in such dignified order that one could not bear to disarrange it. It had heavy, old-fashioned carpets nailed tightly to the floors, and big, uncomfortable chairs done in slippery leather.

There was a house mother who was perfectly agreeable, but as perfectly impersonal, and a woman physician who came through the home weekly and gave out prescriptions of spring tonic and quinine. They had evening prayer meetings and Bible classes, and occasional socials at which they told conundrums and served popcorn and grape juice.

The board made a point of their broadmindedness in allowing masculine callers. One had to tell the house mother that one wished the parlor or part of the parlor on such and such an evening. Then the young man was presented for inspection and allowed to slip up and down in one of the leather chairs for an hour and a quarter. If he stayed longer than this time, the visits were discontinued. But Miss Crane never dreamed of having callers. No one ever dreamed of calling on Miss Crane. "She isn't that kind," the girls told one another understandingly.

This was her life, a life so ordered that it molded her timid, unassertive personality into one of absolute surrender to her circumstances. Other girls came to the home and stayed only long enough to clean up back debts and plan out the future. Sometimes two or three of them would take a small flat together. Once or twice they had asked Miss Crane to come with them, but she had shrunk from making any change.

Year after year she lived in the same dull routine. At the office they called her the "machine" because her work was flawless. It was as unheard of to find a mistake in one of Miss Crane's letters as it would have been to find that the office boy was making out the pay roll. The senior partner, Carl Bronson, used to tell her good-naturedly that she never gave him a chance to vent a little of the rage that he dared not show to customers.

Bronson was a comparatively young man to be a senior partner; he was

only three years older than Miss Crane. He had worked up little by little, until he owned the controlling interest in the firm. Miss Crane's desk was close to his mahogany roll top. She had a little table in an inner room to which she was banished when confidential business was on hand. Sometimes she would be sent for in the middle of some consultation and told to take dictation about an important business secret. Her thin chest would heave with pride and there would be an animated sparkle in her eyes as she realized that she, of all the force, was chosen to share the business secrets of the great house. If Miss Crane had been led to a stake, and slow fagot fires lighted around her, she would not have murmured a word of what had gone into the stenographic pad. Carl Bronson knew this. He told the junior partner, Lambert, that she was as faithful as an old-time Virginia slave mammy.

The office force tolerated Miss Crane.

In their careless way, they realized that she was a fixture. They might come and go, flotsam and jetsam; they might be dismissed, fined, cut in their salaries, dealt with harshly; but the thin little woman with faded brown hair and wistful eyes was there to stay. She knew every detail of the business, every past financial crisis, every quick boom in trade, every change that the

senior partner was contemplating, every secret worry under which he labored. And in a contemptuous manner, they rather respected her, although they doubted her possession of human feelings.

No one knew—not even the office cat, who was also a fixture, and who shared her noonday milk—that within



*She had tiptoed behind Bronson, and had put one dainty hand on the broad tweed shoulder, and laughed as he cried out her name.*

the little woman's heart throbbed and burned a great, generous love for the brusque senior partner, a love so genuine that she dedicated every bit of service of which she was capable to toil under his direction. She had loved him from the time when she had been a shadowy little office girl and he a rosy-cheeked shipping clerk. She adored and idolized him with the added love of a

starved maternity. Just to hear his big, rich voice rolling out the ponderous phrases in stock letters, to hear him laugh over a new joke, to hear him speak to the clerks who dropped their pencils nervously when he walked by—all these ordinary occurrences were to her more wonderful than the finest portrayal of any Shakespearean rôle by the world's greatest actor.

His clothes—the imported tweed business suit, the scarab scarfpin and cuff links, the monogrammed handkerchiefs, the soft English walking hats and the array of canes—were to her as the treasures of an art gallery.

One year the senior partner had gone abroad for the winter. This had been the first sorrow that had wedged itself into her life. Like all narrow lives, it contained neither blackness nor gold, only an indescribable gray color.

Bronson had shaken hands with her kindly, and had told her not to work too hard.

"I'll be back the first of March," he had said. "I'll drop you a few postals."

A philanthropist bestowing a generous check on some struggling charity could not have won more gratitude. No one but Miss Crane's inner self had realized how much those few carelessly spoken words had meant to her. They had been beacon lights of hope along the long shore of lonesome months when the roll-top desk would collect dust, and she take her dictation from the junior partner.

Day after day, during Bronson's absence, she had experienced but one real thrill—this was after reaching the office and glancing at the mail. It was a thrill of wild suspense; it might just be possible that he had sent her word. After she had scanned the letters and found only business matter, she would settle back into her placid state of mind and become the invaluable cog in the iron machinery of the corporation.

Bronson had sent her three postals altogether, and when he had come home, tanned and ruddy, he had brought her a queer little silver fan that he had picked up in Spain. Miss Crane had stammered her thanks, and had unwillingly shown it to the rest of the force. Then she had taken it home and laid it carefully away in a little silk case.

The office employees had changed gradually. Some of the girls had married and had families, which they brought down in installments to show to their former employers. Others had stopped working to stay at home with invalid relatives. A few had gone into business for themselves, and had done fairly well. One had gone on the stage, and changed her name. Miss Crane had seen all of the trousseaus and many of the baby outfits. She had contributed her share toward the funeral wreaths for the two girls who had died, and the office had selected her to write the formal notes to the families. But they had chosen Gladys May to pick out the silver drinking mug for the junior partner's first baby.

Bronson had never married. Miss Crane thanked her God for that. It had not seemed as if she could have borne it to see him marry. In her maidenly heart, she had blushed at the suggestion of such a thought. She had lain awake often, telling herself sharply that of course he would marry; that it was in the natural course of events, like his belonging to the best clubs and taking long vacations. It was expected that he would marry, and marry well. She knew that he sent a great many beautiful flowers to different society women, and that at all the coming-out parties he showered the debutantes with pale-pink rosebuds. Once she had felt a strange quiver of pain when he had shown her a dainty gold bracelet and had asked



her good-naturedly what she thought of it.

Miss Crane had managed to say that it was lovely, and Bronson had answered that it was for his little niece. After that her fingers had flown as swiftly as ever over the keyboard.

Had people known, they would have said that she was a foolish woman to moon over a man who hardly knew whether she wore the white waist with the black tie, or the black waist with the white tie. They would have gone further, and explained that Miss Crane drew a fair salary, and had no large expenses, that she deposited a certain percentage every week in a reliable bank, with an eye to a comfortable old age. She spent little for clothes, nothing for amusement, and a tiny stipend for church dues and belonging to the home's clubs. Therefore, she ought to have had a circle of nice friends who would help her spend a little of her money in showing her how to live and enjoy the pleasures that every one has a right to enjoy.

But Miss Crane could have no more helped herself than that same tropical bird trying to become acclimated to the blizzard weather. She was devoted, body and soul, to the big, burly, magnetic man, who was totally unconscious of his hypnotic powers.

Every Christmas he gave her a gold piece and a pair of white kid gloves. Miss Crane had more pairs of absolutely new gloves laid away next to the silver fan than the average woman with means. It would have been sacrilege with her to have worn any of them. The gold pieces she deposited in the bank. Sometimes she wondered if Mr. Bronson would ask her how the gloves fitted, or if they wore well. She flushed at the thought of having to confess that she had never even tried them on. She wondered what he would think if she told him that they lay wrapped in their white tissue paper

and red ribbon, just as he had placed them on her desk. She contemplated lying to him, should he ask, for fear he might think that she had not appreciated the gift. But Bronson never asked. He gave the gold piece and the gloves as one tips a waiter. He had never wondered about Miss Crane except once, when she had been ill with a cold and a beruffled substitute had switched in to mangle his letters. Then he had telephoned his own doctor, and told him to go to see her.

"Get her jacked up quick," he had demanded. "This inventory time keeps me rushed, and they've sent an awful mistake up from the typewriting office. Why can't these women learn to spell and leave cheap perfume alone?"

Miss Crane had been well the next day, well from the mere fact of his having sent a doctor. The woman physician at the home had looked her over and prescribed a rest. But Bronson's doctor had come in and talked to her almost interestedly. He had prescribed the one magic medicine—he had said that she was missed.

She had come back the next day, a trifle red-eyed and coughing, but the same reliable, soothing secretary upon whom Bronson relied as on a crutch.

Three months before the postal motto was pinned over her desk, the first vivid sorrow had crept into her life.

Bronson had just passed the millionaire mark when this new epoch of Miss Crane's life began. He had a town house and a country shooting lodge. He owned a motor car, and was negotiating for a yacht. Yet all his money success had not changed the bigness of his nature. He still stopped to ask the old watchman about his rheumatism, or to joke with the bent clerk who had once been his head official. So many baskets of turkeys went to so many quiet, unasking poor twice a year, and so many dollars made

so many pale-faced babies happy on a sunny old farm that Bronson had bought for just this purpose.

"No fools' gold, either," said the junior partner one day, in Bronson's absence.

Miss Crane had drawn an indignant breath at the very suggestion of such a term. To her, Bronson was a glorified, halo-clad creature, whose smile was life to those who were chosen to bask in its rays. Then the new epoch had begun.

A fluffy, girlish person, in a pale-blue motoring costume, had bounded into the private office one afternoon. She had tiptoed behind Bronson, and had put one dainty hand on the broad tweed shoulder, and laughed as he cried out her name.

Miss Crane had looked aghast. To dare to interrupt him, to break through the gantlet of office boys, to come unceremoniously into his very presence, to laugh at him, pout, demand that he stop work immediately and come out for a spin, to clap her hands in child fashion when he had said "yes," and to let the big brown eyes look at him coquettishly as he had whispered that she was a good fairy to rescue him!

"I'll be back, Miss Crane——"

"To-morrow," the newcomer had interrupted very assuredly.

Bronson had smiled indulgently.

"To-morrow," he had repeated.

"But the letters for the Indiana man," Miss Crane had suggested timidly.

"Let 'em go."

Bronson had been wrapping a filmy fold of the blue coat around the girl. He had hardly said good night as he had hurried out after her.

After that, Miss Crane learned what real suffering was. She had heard a faint rumor of an unhappy early affair that had barred Bronson from marriage. But it had been a comfortably indefinite rumor that had roused no

keen anxiety. This was different. For the first time in her life, she beheld Bronson late at the office, rushing away early, going out to three-hour luncheons with a corsage of violets tucked in his pocket. She knew that he wrote long, ardent notes while he pretended to be looking over her letters. She saw him gaze for moments at a time at a snapshot of the doll-baby girl that he had had framed and kept on his desk. She heard him telephoning her with timid eagerness to ask if he might see her, if she would let him take her to various places. It was no senior partner telephoning; it was a rejuvenated, joyous man, seeking happiness, and knowing that it was near at hand.

When the time came for the charity ball, Miss Crane wrote the letter to the florist, giving minute details as to the bouquet. She heard him telephone the girl as to the exact time when he was to come for her, and listened to his ardent assurances that he did not care if there was not another woman at the ball; in fact, he would be much better pleased.

The office began talking about the affair as well. This was doubly hard to stand. They insisted on hanging around her desk and telling her that the girl was a *débutante*, one of the season's best offerings, the daughter of a steel magnate, and of good family as well. They called Bronson a "cradle snatcher," and speculated as to when the marriage would take place, and whether the yacht would be used on the wedding journey.

By degrees Miss Crane grew accustomed to the pain. But it was a new Miss Crane, an awakened, jealous woman, who watched the one big interest in her life drift hopelessly out of sight. She had not realized until this occurred how contented she had previously been.

Toward Easter, when Miss Crane

knew that a solitaire ring had gone to the girl, she began wondering whether she would be expected to go to the wedding with the rest of the office force and sit in the rear pews; whether she must watch the girl in her bride's white dress, walking up the long church aisle; whether she must watch him as he stood at the chancel rail, waiting for her; whether she would be able to close her eyes, unobserved by the others, and so be spared the pain of seeing them stand together as they pledged their vows. It did not seem as if she could bear it. She felt as if she would rise up and protest when the question, "Is there any lawful reason?" was asked.

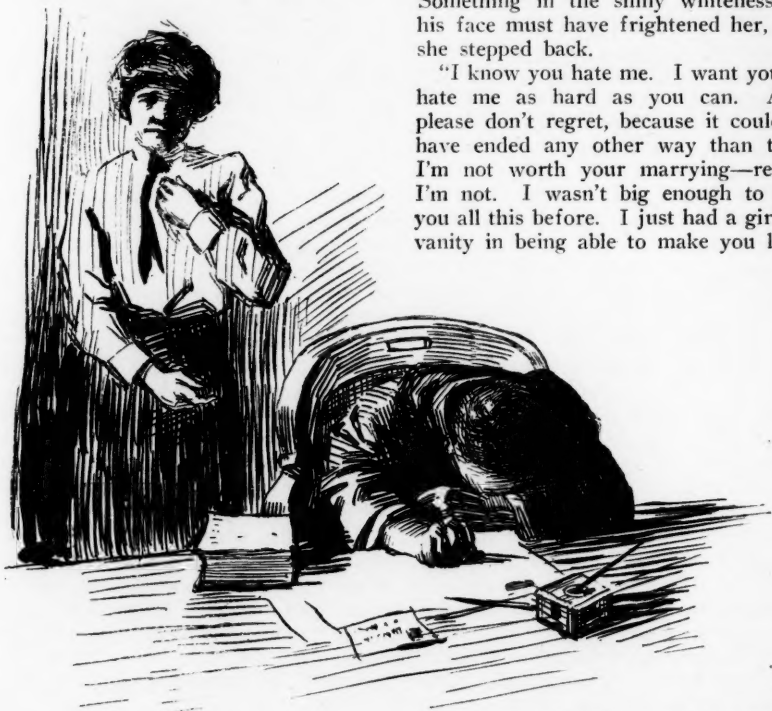
It was a murky spring day when the

girl came into the office to tell the senior partner the truth. Miss Crane was in the inner room, sorting out law papers. The girl thought that Bronson was quite alone.

"I've been awfully unfair to you," she said quietly, holding out the ring, "and Alan Gilbert says that I must tell you everything. I don't love you. I never meant to marry you. I've never loved any one but Alan, only father would not listen to it. So I made believe to love you, and they thought that I had forgotten. I was married to Alan yesterday, and we told father last night. He is very angry with me, but I think by and by he will see that it was best, and forgive us——"

She looked up at Bronson timidly. Something in the shiny whiteness of his face must have frightened her, for she stepped back.

"I know you hate me. I want you to hate me as hard as you can. And please don't regret, because it couldn't have ended any other way than this. I'm not worth your marrying—really I'm not. I wasn't big enough to tell you all this before. I just had a girlish vanity in being able to make you love



*She stood motionless, helpless, baffled.*

me, in making a millionaire dance at my apron strings!"

"You lied to me!" said Bronson loudly. "You lied!"

She laid the ring on the desk, but he did not seem to notice it.

"Alan said that I must ask you to forgive me," she repeated glibly. "But I don't——"

"This is rough stuff to tell a man, little girl," Bronson said gravely, "*rough stuff!* But, after all, you are only a little girl, and you didn't know what dangerous things you were playing with. Besides, you wanted the boy."

He smiled a little bitterly, as he saw the light flash into her face at the mere mention of her lover.

"Then you will forgive me?" she begged, reaching out her hand.

Bronson took it without hesitation.

"I am glad you are happy," he told her earnestly, "and you mustn't bother about an old codger's feelings. I was foolish, too. But we all have our day-dreams, even the most staid and businesslike. And I had been lonesome for a long, long time. I'll telephone your father and make him see a different side to it, if you like. And I wish you all kinds of—happiness."

There were tears in the brown eyes as she thanked him and slipped away, glad to escape without the deserved reproaches, eager to join her boy husband, who waited without. After all, youth is only youth, with cruel limitations. Only living brings mellow realization.

Bronson waited until her light step had died away. Then he picked up the ring and held it out meditatively. Suddenly, he flung it on the floor, and, sinking into his desk chair, he buried his head in his arms on the blotter pad, sobbing convulsively.

Miss Crane had never heard a strong man cry. She had never dreamed that the senior partner could show weak-

ness. She forgot her years of servitude and rushed from the inner room, to stand trembling in the doorway. Latent womanhood was roused. If she could only go to him, to put her hands on those broad, shaking shoulders, to whisper as no one but a woman can whisper that the fluffy girl was not worth it, that she was *not* worth it. Yet she stood motionless, helpless, baffled. To see Bronson sobbing like a child, to think of the girl so glibly slipping out of the honored place that he had permitted her to occupy—— She glanced at her thin, nervous figure in a near-by mirror; it seemed to mock her struggling, feminine impulses, which had lain so long dormant.

Presently, Bronson looked up, dry-eyed, sullen. Tears were a woman's remedy. He had not given way to emotion in years. Some strange chord of vanity and personal loneliness had been rudely twanged, and the strong man's inner self quivered responsively to the discord.

A red crept into his cheeks as he saw Miss Crane. Then he smiled unconsciously. She was reaching out a thin, trembling hand to him. She looked like a gentle caricature of some statue of Sympathy trying to aid mortals.

Miss Crane did not know that she had reached out her hand. Every beat of her heart was sounding like a clarion gong to her bewildered mind. To let him know that she had heard him crying, to humiliate him, to have him feel a necessity for explanation! She hated herself for the blunder, for the impelling something that had brought her to the doorway.

She turned and fled, snatching her hat and coat from the rack and throwing them on with unheard-of haste. Bronson was not a dull man where women were concerned, but because his secretary had merely been an accurate, valuable machine, on which his firm had relied for twenty-four years, he

had never stopped to wonder whether she cared for anything but a time clock and new improvements in the way of carbon sheets. But that one moment of watching her stand in the doorway, her hand outstretched to him in symbol of a woman's long-hidden love and sympathy, revealed the truth that Miss Crane had successfully kept buried.

Bronson was confused, almost ruffled. No man discovers that a woman has loved him in faithful servitude and silence for over twenty years without its producing a glowing feeling of self-esteem and satisfaction. One can never quite ignore anything that loves one. Bronson strode across the floor and called Miss Crane loudly by name. A sleepy office boy told him that she had just left the building.

Bronson went back to his desk. After all, it would be better to wait until the next morning.

He picked up the neglected ring, the feeling of bitterness surging back into his heart as he thought of the buoyant, joyous, imperative youth that had passed him by to seek its own. Growing old is a series of shocks, the first of which is the realization that youth is looking at you with somewhat awed eyes, instead of joining hands with you. Next comes the admission to yourself that you no longer care for the things of youth; that pleasures are mellow, instead of fresh and striking; that sorrow has become a broadening, gentle influence, instead of a rebellious, despairing experience; that mirth has changed to humor, a graver, sweeter way of finding the silver lining to every cloud, the extreme triumph over pessimism; that love has become an accepted part of the weaver's pattern, instead of the paramount issue of life; that achievement has taken the place of momentary success; while the thing that men call death has become solemn and simple, instead of the remote,

hideous tragedy that youth fights against.

The senior partner did not analyze these feelings as he sat looking at the ring—but the idea that, after all, he was done with youth, and that quiet, dignified middle age was his right, came to him with a soothing calm, like a summer breeze at the close of a sultry midsummer day.

He thought of Miss Crane again, and of her pitiful secret rudely dragged to light. A tender expression came into his face, and he wondered whether, in the years devoted to business, many women who serve but one man learn to care for him. They tell the world that they are interested in their work—he had read articles in magazines and listened to club talks on the subject. But somehow Bronson felt that a woman inevitably seeks for some one to idolize. Every woman who wears a stiff collar and carries her lunch may not be happy even if she has the independence of eating wherever she pleases when six o'clock comes. Business confidences cannot take the place of man-and-wife secrets. Bronson wondered if these same capable, reliable women did not envy girls with stacks of puffs and slimsy satin dresses who have some one waiting for them on the corner every evening. It is true that they leave before three months are out, or are dismissed, but they end with a baby in their arms and a man who acknowledges them as the one big thing in his life.

After all, the rarest thing in the world is the unselfish love a woman has for the one man in her life. It savors of the great maternal love that women have for all mankind. And blessed is he who can call such a love his!

Bronson looked at the office clock. It was past closing time. His bitter feeling toward the girl had vanished; strange to say, he found himself think-



"Why did you go away?"

ing of her as of a child who had played with forces that it had not been capable of understanding.

The next morning, a red-faced, untidy woman sat at Miss Crane's desk. Miss Crane was not well, and the new woman had been sent as a substitute. Bronson worried through the day, discovering that the substitute could not spell, neither did she know the golden rule of silence. He told her that if Miss Crane was not able to come back the following day, they would find some one to do her work in the office. Miss Crane did not come back the next morning, and a mealy-faced office boy, who yawned and thought of last night's show, worried with the work, picking out letters on the typewriter with pugilistic fingers, and smudging clean envelopes with a heavy thumb.

The third day, Bronson began to wonder whether Miss Crane was seriously ill, whether she had some one to look after her, whether she had enough money. He had not connected her absence with the scene in his office. He thought it merely a coincidence that she had been taken ill just afterward. Bronson's book on the iron industry was waiting for Miss Crane's reliable copying. He would allow no one else to do that.

He looked up her address and called for his car. He could not stand the mealy-faced office boy, or the girl who cried when he told her that she must have some regard for a pe-

riod. He was so used to the quiet, always ready little woman who had sat beside him year after year that he was like a cripple who has been deprived of his crutch, yet who expects to go on walking at the same pace. It annoyed and irritated Bronson, like the deprivation of any material comfort.

As he neared the working girls' home, Bronson looked at the tall brick walls, the unattractive surroundings, the narrow, dark windows, with their severe curtains, and wondered how women endured such an outlook. He had become keenly sensitive, in these last prosperous years, to opulent surroundings, luxurious appointments, and an æsthetic outlook.

The matron, who wore round, owlsh glasses and dressed in a depressing gray woolen stuff, told him that Miss Crane had left the day before. She



had left no address; she had probably not considered it necessary, as she never had any mail but circulars. She was quite well, there had been no trouble. The board were surprised at her leaving; they had always counted Miss Crane a fixture.

"It is often that way," complained the matron. "When we have sheltered a girl through the early years, she leaves us at the time when she no longer needs our protection. In loyalty to the home, we feel that Miss Crane should have stayed with us. But there are very few people, Mr. Bronson, who are loyal."

Bronson retreated, after smothering an earnest desire to tell the matron his unbiased opinion. Everything in the place reminded him of a letter press, a huge, cruel press in which human beings were placed at exact angles and properly and systematically squeezed until every drop of enthusiasm and originality and humanness had been extracted. A few might manage to wiggle away from its clutch, but the majority became colorless, wistful individuals, who peered at life through a grating. Miss Crane was an example.

He left his card and a message, in case Miss Crane should return. When he stood outside, a smell of the cafeteria dinner of stew and potatoes reaching him, he heaved a sigh of relief. And she had lived there for over twenty years!

He stepped back into his car and drove home. Where had she gone? How could he reach her? She had vanished like a rare, pale sunbeam that had shone steadily and then had been snuffed out. The matron had said that she was not ill. Bronson moved uneasily among the lap robes. He could not imagine her asking for a new position; she would have to give him as a reference, since she had worked for no one else. Suppose she had left the city—but he laughed at the very thought of

her boarding a snorting train and defiantly seeking her fortunes in a strange land. She must have saved a few hundred dollars; with care, they would last her some little time. She might hide until she was driven back to work. And all because—there was no vanity in Bronson's soul as he admitted the reason—all because she loved him, because she had betrayed her secret in that one impulsive gesture of sympathy and love as she had stood in the doorway watching him. He did not know that long after his tears had dried, Miss Crane had carried them in her heart in silent agony.

Two days later, Bronson was tempted to put a "personal" in the morning paper. He had never believed that he would descend to such a thing, and he planned to word it so that only she would ever know. The very fact that he was able to write it so that "only she" would know made him realize the close bond of confidence that the years had builded between them.

Before he did this, he went through the office, asking the force if they knew of Miss Crane's whereabouts. The office had barely commented on her absence; they had supposed that she was taking a vacation at an off time in order to accommodate some one else. No one knew where she was. Bronson could see that they did not care.

The "personal" seemed a melodramatic thing to do, as well as uncertain. There must be some more definite, subtle way in which to bring her back. The neglected manuscript of his book stared up at him with reproach. It was due at the publishers within a short time; Miss Crane was copying it as extra work, staying overtime. Bronson felt that he could trust no one else with the manuscript.

The mail had gathered in untidy heaps on his desk; there were tag ends of memoranda floating about; dust had

settled on his letter file; and the spindle containing engagement dates, of which he kept no track until reminded of them by Miss Crane's quiet word, was filled to overflowing.

"I want her," said Bronson out loud suddenly.

He wanted her for her work, for her soothing presence, which straightened out the tangles that his burly self had made. He could not stand any one else in her place. And he wanted her because his sympathies had been awakened, as well as his employer's sense of appreciation. The exquisite shyness of her flight as soon as he had fathomed her secret made Bronson's heart glow. There was something appealing, tender, delightfully feminine about it.

And in all this time the fluffy girl had been given scarcely a thought; she had been blotted out by this colorless little stenographer, whose absence created such a yawning gap in his scheme of things.

Love at twenty is spontaneous, romantic, all-impelling, a disturbing, selfish emotion that commands its victims as hopeless slaves. At forty, one loves for a number of well-chosen, careful reasons—comradeship, mutual loneliness, a definite, lasting respect and admiration. Bronson could even smile as he thought of the girl. After all, she had served her purpose in showing him his folly.

He wrote a note and sent for a boy.

"Take that to the city editor of the *Cry*," he said. "Be sure that Mr. Penfold gets it himself."

He leaned back contentedly in his chair.

"I think it will help," he told himself, as he looked over the roll-top desk into the empty private office.

Miss Crane's return two days later created no furore.

"The boss was asking for her—maybe she's stayed overtime," suggested a

minor clerk, as she nodded hurriedly and rushed into her own office.

"Maybe she thought he'd be away—she didn't know he changed his mind at the last minute," answered his companion.

Meantime, Miss Crane had slipped into Bronson's big office. There was a strange stillness about it. She rubbed her hands to warm them, and then took out her duplicate keys to unlock a lower drawer. Another five minutes and the book manuscript was being properly attended to; the door of her private domain was closed, and a happy woman was doing her last service for the man she loved.

"Why did you go away?"

Bronson's voice was gentle, but when she turned to see him standing there, his glorious self smiling at her, Miss Crane dropped her hands from the keyboard with a frightened flutter.

"Why did you go away—and come back when you thought I would not be here?" he asked, with dogged persistence, coming into the office and shutting the door. He took in at a glance the manuscript, the freshly written pages, the inimitable touches of a woman's neatness that pervaded the re-occupied room.

"You—know——" she whispered obediently.

"Because you saw me acknowledge my folly to myself, because you showed me what you have hidden for so long," Bronson told her, with a sudden petulance. "And when you knew that I had read your message, you fled from me as a wounded animal does to some dark, hidden cave. And there you would have stayed if I had not planned to bring you back."

"To bring me back?"

Miss Crane looked up in bewilderment.

Bronson pointed at his book.

"That was on your mind—you knew,

when the copy was due. You had worked overtime on it, night and day; you knew that I would not let any one else touch it. That haunted you when you went away, into some other God-forsaken boarding house. I knew that it would haunt you. You wouldn't come back to me; you wanted to be alone to pull yourself together and argue out the necessity of working somewhere else, where I would not be annoyed by seeing some one who knew that I had been a fool. Don't you give me credit for thinking that out?"

She shook her head in a frightened, uncertain manner.

"I did. I went to the home; I asked in the office; nobody seemed to know. The cashier said that your pay envelope had not been called for; your substitute said that she had been sent from an agency, not by you personally. So I published the story about my going to the coast immediately. I knew that you read the morning paper."

She nodded. It was still unbelievable.

"I knew that, when you read that, you would slip back here to finish my book, and then slip away again, satis-

fied. You see, you walked into the net quite nicely, after all." Bronson laughed.

"I meant to go away," she faltered. "You see, I—I——"

"I see. You meant to hide again, just as I told you. But you can't. I won't let you."

Into Miss Crane's face there came a strange illumination. The girl of twenty who had never lived was shining through the woman's tired face, making it beautiful. It contained the rarest thing!

"You want me back—— You won't mind—— Oh, I can't! I—I—can't!"

She put her hands up appealingly.

Bronson took them gently in his own.

"I want you back," he told her seriously. "I want you because I can't get on without you. The senior partner's job is held by teamwork."

She lifted her head to smile at his tribute.

"I'll—come," she whispered slowly.

"And then," continued Bronson, in the same gentle manner, "I want to know you—the you who has waited to be known for such a long, long time!"

### The World Is a Beautiful Place

THE world is a beautiful place.

My song—

On a wide, white beach the delicate lace  
Of foam glides in from a turquoise sea,  
And a sail far out swells buoyantly,  
And wild gulls dip and rise and whirl,  
Spread wings a gleam like a water pearl.  
The world is a beautiful place.

The world is a beautiful place,

My song—

For I saw the glory, dear, of your face,  
Like a rose, like dawn, like poppy gold  
Aflame in the sun, with a story as old  
As Life is old. Love's cup of wine  
I raise to your lips, for your heart is mine.  
*The world is a beautiful place!*

STELLA SANTON.



## The Dominant Note

By Leigh Gordon Giltner

Author of "The Way of a Maid," "A Belated Blossoming," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NEAL TRUSLOW

A BIG, burly, good-natured-looking chap, of a cast of countenance unmistakably Celtic, boarded the trolley, strode up the aisle with a swagger that palpably smacked of the stage, and dropped into the vacant place beside a man whom the woman in the next seat had already identified as the tenor of the Santley Repertoire Company, which had sung "Martha" at the local opera house the previous evening.

"Heard the glad tidings, Blondy?" queried the newcomer in the big, boyish baritone that had so admirably rendered the rôle of *Plunkett*. The tenor turned upon the speaker a face of the rather insipid, straight-featured type that the *matinée* maid—and its possessor—invariably consider irresistibly handsome.

"Spring it, Cregan," he invited fretfully. "I'm prepared for the worst. The jinx seems to be working overtime on the Santleys this trip."

"Sabel's quit," announced Cregan succinctly. "Had a round with Santley over the dressing rooms and skipped without notice."

"How about Trixie?"

"Trix struck, too—sympathetic strike. There's where Santley scored a fall-down. Might have known that a jolt that would jar Jocelyn loose would send Trix off the hooks as well. That's what happened. Trix took up her sister's scrap and hiked for the Rialto with Jocelyn. We're up against it, Blondel.

We can't give 'Trovatore' without an *Asucena*, and it means a canceled date—maybe two or three. Santley's wired East for Trebelli, but she can't get to us under a couple of days, even if she happens to be at liberty. And the house is sold out for both nights! Isn't that rotten luck?"

"Rank," conceded Blondel disgustedly. "That's what comes of hitting the tank-town circuit with a bunch of has-beens—barring you and Sentor, Cregan. Santley's a big stiff, anyhow. Ought to have had a reliable understudy for that brace of wild cats, knowing that Sabel's a she-devil and Trix another. But that's Santley!" And with the gloom of the tenor's countenance reflected on the wontedly jovial face of the big Irish baritone, they left the car.

Meantime the woman in the seat immediately back of theirs, overhearing in spite of herself, had suddenly formed a resolve so radical that it quite swept away her breath.

Madolyn Davis' projected career as a singer had arrived at a "lame and impotent conclusion," her fellow citizens would have said, had not Shakespeare been "caviare to the general" in the rather provincial city of Wortham. Her voice was a mezzo of wonderful brilliance and flexibility, with a rare contralto quality in its lower register, but its range was limited, and the organ so delicate as to require the most intelli-

gent care and training. And because the stage was the girl's sole ambition, while her rather repellent attitude toward the village swains made matrimony seem a remote contingency for her, her parents had, with some difficulty, contrived to give her three years of study aboard.

Her teacher, the world-famous Santoni, had enthused over the possibilities of her voice, beginning in her second year of study to coach her carefully in various stock contralto rôles. The girl possessed, unmistakably, the histrionic temperament, an attractive personality, and a passionate devotion to her art, and Santoni had unhesitatingly predicted great things for her. So it had been with high hopes of an important American engagement that she had turned homeward.

But the sea air had seriously affected her voice; she had been ill throughout the voyage; she was of a highly nervous temperament, and even Santoni's enthusiasm had not engendered supreme self-confidence. Circumstances had seemed to combine to thwart her hopes; all things had apparently wrought together for ill. The managers who had consented to hear her had not been sufficiently impressed to offer her anything worth her while. So, after a brief, disillusioning struggle for a foothold, she had reluctantly returned to Wortham.

The latter, a city in size, had never outgrown the provincialism of a village. Its denizens were divided between civic pride in Madolyn as a local product, and a disposition to resent any assumption of "airs" or patronage on her part. Unfortunately her initial local appearance in concert had engendered the latter impression. Anxious to display her advance in her art, she had arranged a program quite beyond the grasp of the Worthamites, in whose philosophy Debussy was undreamed of. The girl's sensitive artistic temperament had made her instantly aware that her audience

was not in sympathy with her, and the knowledge had tended to increase her natural nervousness.

Under the chill of her auditors' unresponsiveness, her cadenzas had lost something of their wonted brilliance; her notes had lacked their usual sureness; the program had dragged lamentably; and the beautiful voice had grown flat and toneless with discouragement, as her fellow townspeople had affronted her with perfunctory applause. What she had figured to herself as a triumph, had deteriorated into something like a fiasco.

She had vowed inwardly to sing no more in her native city, and had been preparing to try her fortune again in the metropolis when her father had died suddenly. Her mother, prostrated by the shock, had sunk into a chronic invalidism, which had demanded Madolyn's entire time and thought, and the abandonment of her plans and her practice. And when, after nearly five years of loving service, she had found herself alone in the world, she seemed to have lost interest in her art and herself alike.

Exhausted by the long strain, and worn with anxiety and weariness, the girl had been ill able to resist the inroads of an attack of typhoid, which had left her spent, weak, and—temporarily voiceless. Though in time the voice had come back—slightly impaired as to quality, and a trifle thin in its upper register, yet still exceptionally lovely—she had flatly refused to sing for any one. Still, she had kept her dream of ultimate success as a singer, practicing constantly in private, and always hoping for a return to her cherished career.

Feeling herself branded a failure, at odds with her fellow townsmen, out of touch with the musical world, the girl had withdrawn more and more within herself, repelling the advances of would-be friends and admirers with a

weary indifference that tended to her further isolation. Her illness had left her spent and inert; the years passed; the instinctive "Miss Madolyn" of her few acquaintances seemed to label her the confirmed spinster; yet she lingered listlessly in Wortham, awaiting some impetus to renewed effort.

And now, at last, this impetus had been supplied by a few casual words, overheard by the merest chance; for when the trolley paused at the opera-house crossing, she left it, and, summoning all her courage, sought and found Santley, whom she instinctively identified with a shrewd-looking, well-groomed individual, running over a handful of letters and telegrams in the foyer.

"I beg your pardon," she said breathlessly, giving herself no pause. "You are Mr. Santley? I understand that you want a substitute contralto for 'Trovatore' this evening. I'm letter-perfect in the rôle of *Azucena*—can sing it either in Italian or English

The manager



Her tones rang beautifully rich and full, rising on the final phrase to a cry appalling in its agony.



was looking her over keenly, appraisingly. "Professional?" he interrogated brusquely. "What name?"

"Semi," answered the girl with equal brevity. "Renée Vidal"—the florid stage name of Santoni's suggestion.

"Listens well," was Santley's comment. "Experience? Who coached you in the rôle?"

"Santoni. I studied with him three years." Madolyn could see the manager's interest increase visibly. "Do you care to give me a try-out?"

"Sure." Santley was a man of swift decision. "Come inside. It'll take me just about three minutes to tell if you'll answer. Rossoli!"

Out on the shadowy stage, with the company's temperamental Italian conductor at the piano, the orchestra circle a yawning black pit before her, and Santley's keen eyes and ears abnormally alert, Madolyn felt herself turn cold with nervousness and self-distrust. She began uncertainly. How small, and thin, and scared her voice sounded in the vast, empty auditorium! Santley stirred restlessly. Like an electric shock came to Madolyn the consciousness that the chance she had prayed for for years was slipping from her, and that for the second time she was branding herself a failure.

"A moment," she said, with a new note in her voice.

Hastily she flung aside hat and coat, and drew out the pins that held her heavy hair, shaking it loose about her face. And when a second later she again took the stage, she was no longer the quiet, colorless personage whom Santley had mentally appraised as "no broiler," but the vengeful, half-distraught gypsy, instinct with the fire of a long-smoldering hate and fury. She sang the "*Stride la Vampa*" with all the frenzied terror, grief, and anguish Santoni had taught her to infuse into face and voice. Her tones rang beautifully rich and full, rising on the final

phrase to a cry appalling in its agony. She forgot no slightest detail of Santoni's careful coaching, even while inspired utterly with the spirit of the rôle, into which she had thrown herself with absolute abandon. She heard Santley take a long breath; saw Rossoli, at the piano, rise with a rapturous:

"But it is ze voice of Fabbri, of Seguin! Signorina, you are ze seenger, ze actress, ze artist!"

Then Santley spoke: "All right. Save your voice. You'll do, I think, Miss Vidal. Voice a bit shrill in the upper tones, but you manage it well, and you're the actress all right. At any rate, we won't cancel till we've tried a rehearsal. Call the company together for eleven, Rossoli. Now we'll talk terms, if you please, Miss Vidal."

The rehearsal went smoothly. Madolyn saved herself for the evening, singing half voice, and merely working up the essential stage business. Blondel, the tenor, and Sentor, the elderly soprano, were inclined to superciliousness, but good-natured Kerry Cregan—who sang *De Luna*—hastened to assure her:

"You're all to the good, Miss Vidal. We're lucky to have you help us out of the deuce of a hole! And you've got Sabel skinned a block. We'll all 'feed' your part, and you'll pull through all right."

And she did. Lifted out of any possible self-consciousness by the knowledge that her make-up made her unrecognizable, Madolyn let herself go absolutely, throwing herself with entire abandon into her rôle. She gave with an admirable effect of desolation and despair the "*Giorni Poveri*"; and the "*Stride la Vampa*," which she sang with even more of fire and passion than she had that morning, brought her half a dozen encores. When, in the prison scene, she essayed the immortal duo with *Manrico*, Blondel was suddenly conscious of a full, velvety tone

that sustained and supported his own attenuated bleat as Sabel's megaphonic mezzo had never done.

The girl's acting savored almost of inspiration; it was like wine to her to hear the vociferous applause of the very critics who had decried her efforts years before. She seemed to have spent her whole colorless existence for this supreme moment; and Santley and Rossoli congratulated her and themselves beside acts.

Down in the orchestra circle, a tall, slender, middle-aged man, with a pale, ascetic face, was saying to the friend beside him:

"Good work, Foster! That contralto has a genuine gift. She's far and away above the rest of the cast—worthy of a better company. Whom does she suggest to you? There's a resemblance to some one I've seen or known that puzzles me rather. Notice it?" But Foster did not.

Had Madolyn guessed that Rand Templeton, whose friendship had been one of the few real interests of her recent years, was appraising her performance from the front, dismayed self-consciousness might have marred her interpretation. Templeton was an author who had unmistakably arrived, the writer of sundry novels, plotless for the most part, and somewhat deficient in characterization, but so cameolike in their perfection of phrase and finish, so vivid in description, so exquisite in coloring and technique, that his fame was already more than national. Personally, he was a man of rare charm, but of the most intense reserve, seldom entirely unbending even to the favored few with whom he affiliated. Madolyn was one of these. Her history intrigued him; her striking face, with its hint of tragedy, interested him oddly. He had sought her out, and had so far broken down her—and his own—reserve that they had become friends of a sort.

Although Templeton, absorbed from

his early youth in books and study, had lived the life of an anchorite, there was still within him a latent spirit of adventure which the passage of years had not wholly stilled. He was considered cold; he himself did not realize that he was instead temperamental in the extreme. He thought of himself as unemotional, if not emotionless. Yet it was Madolyn Davis' absolute freedom from any approach to feminine coquetry, her frank camaraderie, her habit of self-repression, that had prevented their friendship from developing into something more. Templeton himself had not guessed this; he did not dream that there was within his nature a temperamental spark that needed only an answering flare to fan it into flame.

Madolyn interested him more than any woman he had known; her dark beauty delighted his critical sense; yet there was in their association a something elusive, indefinable, that kept it entirely platonic. Staid, sober man of letters as he was, Templeton felt instinctively, though he had never formulated this feeling, that this self-contained, emotionless, icily beautiful woman could never supply the varied needs of his nature.

His feeling for music was as intelligent as it was intense. His musical mentality found a keen stimulus in tracing a Wagner *motif* through a complex of interwoven themes; yet he confessed himself sufficiently archaic to care for Italian opera of the old school, even the time-worn "Trovatore." As he listened—in absolute unconsciousness of her identity—to Madolyn's *Azucena*, with its rare power and appeal, he felt oddly *en rapport* with the unknown singer, whose personality, though merged in that of the hapless gypsy, seemed to project itself across the footlights.

"There's temperament," he commented to Foster, in rapt recognition of the sheer artistry of her interpretation, "in the utmost degree."

"Temper, too, I fancy," confirmed Foster. "I'm told she had a scrap with Santley last night after the show that made a noise like Ætna in eruption. Thought she'd left the cast."

"She has—if you mean Sabel," chimed in an acquaintance at Foster's right. "This singer's an understudy or a substitute, but she's got Sabel seventeen up and one to play when it comes to voice and action."

As a matter of fact, the programs having been already printed, Sabel was still billed as *Azucena*; nor had Santley troubled to account for his rare "find" either to the public or to the members of the company.

It did not need the enthusiastic encomiums of Wortham's two morning papers, or Santley's direct offer of a permanent engagement, to assure Madolyn of her success. She had felt herself throughout the evening in absolute command of her voice, her art, herself. With the telepathic perception of the true artist, she had known herself and her audience in perfect sympathy, and realized that she was getting her part across the footlights. And it amused her vastly that the crude critics and the cruder public who had decried her earlier performance should hail her as a new star on the musical horizon.

All the day following her triumph in



He saw Cregan coolly stoop and adjust one of Siebel's high tan boots which had wrinkled down a trifle.

"Trovatore," she lived in a sort of transport. She walked through a rehearsal for "Faust" and went home, ostensibly to rest for the night performance, but in reality to dream of new worlds to conquer.

"If they didn't recognize me as *Azucena*," she felicitated herself, "they'll scarcely suspect me of *Siebel*. I'm considered a century plant in Wortham. They think me too archaic to appear in an 'old folks' concert,' so they'll hardly

identify me with the young swain of *Marguerite*."

The atmosphere in the little playhouse was electrical that night. A thrill of admiration followed the appearance of *Siebel*, brave in azure fleshings, high suède boots, blond wig, and velvet cloak. Madolyn could have laughed aloud at the humor of it all—the prim "Miss Madolyn" of local fame, in doublet and hose, bepowdered and rouged, seated in full view of all conservative Wortham, on the edge of a table, center stage, surrounded by a clamorous group of principals and chorus men, her perfect figure frankly inviting the gaze of the proletariat—though her first almost irresistible impulse when she came on had been to clutch her cloak tightly about her—her wonted quiet mien replaced by the boyish swagger of the youthful gallant.

She sang the garden scene superbly. Delicate ardor informed the opening phrases of the famous "Flower Song." Infinite pathos sobbed in the recitative:

"Alas! that dark stranger foretold me what my doom should be. Ne'er again to touch a flow'ret, lest blighted it fall!"

Supreme triumph thrilled in the exultant:

"Dark fiend, I fear thee no more!"

The house went wild. Rossoli, conducting with inspiring ardor, embraced this fellow artist with his smiling gaze. And Santley, in the wings, swore delightedly, though the archaic *Marguerite*, turned sulky, was singing a trifle off key.

Madolyn felt herself a disembodied spirit. No longer herself, but the youthful *Siebel*, she *lived*, not acted, the rôle. Arch, naïve, delightfully boyish and ardent, her portrayal was one that even Rossoli, with his traditions of La Scala, could but respect.

And Templeton, again well down in front, followed her every tone and movement with increasing fascination.

The singer's haunting likeness to some other he had known still puzzled him, though he strove to separate her portrayal from any question of personality. The stage had never had any particular glamour for him; even in his youth he had not been given to haunting stage doors and wasting his substance on the Circean show girl. He imagined that his interest in the singer—billed to-night as "Mademoiselle Renée Vidal"—was wholly impersonal. Yet he was conscious of a sort of electrical current flowing across the footlights and thrilling his being with a distinctly pleasurable shock. Had he but guessed it, the temperamental spark in Renée Vidal's stage personality had met an answering flare in his own repressed nature. This creature, so physically flawless, so light, so airy, so elusive, was stirring his fancy, his feeling, as no woman of his own somber world had ever done.

Against all tradition, he presently found himself at the stage door, his heart throbbing as tumultuously as that of any youth, his being thrilled with an odd blend of emotions he did not try to define. The stage doorkeeper, recognizing neither Templeton nor his importance, told him carelessly: "Miss Vidal left the theater ten minutes ago." And neither he nor Santley was able to supply her address.

Templeton did not return to witness the further woes of the hapless *Marguerite*. For an hour he paced the city streets aimlessly and abstractedly, seeking his apartment at length with a fixed resolve in his mind. He had an important engagement with his publishers' representative the next morning, but it was his definite intention to witness the Santley Company's opening in "Faust" in Wilmington, a neighboring city, the following night. He marveled at himself; yet, self-deceived as is the average man at such an emotional crisis, he assured himself that he was following this unknown singer to her next stand mere-

ly to test the validity of his first impression of her genius.

The odd acceleration of his heart action as the curtain went up that night should have warned him. He sat breathlessly hanging upon *Siebel's* every look and movement. Grown more sure of herself, Madolyn was playing the rôle in a manner that made Rossoli wriggle delightedly in his conductor's chair. When she left the stage, Templeton deliberately rose, and as deliberately "went back."

The doorkeeper was not at his post, and Templeton found himself presently in the strange, unreal region that lies back of the drop. At the head of a stairway leading down from the stage to her dressing room, stood the figure of the woman he sought. Beside her, bending over her in close converse, was Kerry Cregan, who was singing *Valentine*. Neither observed Templeton, and, as he drew nearer, he saw Cregan coolly stoop and adjust one of *Siebel's* high tan boots which had wrinkled down a trifle, disclosing a glimpse of shapely silken fleshings.

The action was involuntary, almost unconscious, and apparently entirely inoffensive, but Templeton felt himself grow rigid with revulsion and distaste. What had he in common with these people of the stage, with their painted faces, their easy ethics, their freedom of manner, if not of morals? Why had he been so foolish as to endeavor to separate the woman from her art? What familiarity, what coarseness she must have experienced in the course of a career that suddenly struck him as tinselled and tawdry. He was making his way out, when, at a word from Cregan, the singer turned, and the light fell full upon her face. Templeton's heart skipped a beat, for in the features of the smiling *Siebel* he had recognized, despite the make-up, quiet, colorless Miss Davis! For an instant, bereft of the power of speech or motion, he

stared stupidly at the brave figure of the young gallant, who, plumed hat in hand, his velvet cloak flung jauntily back, one small booted foot on the step above that on which he stood, had fallen into an attitude unconsciously boyish. Then Templeton found himself dazedly following the contralto down the stair and along the corridor that led to the dressing rooms. She had just opened her door, and was entering, when a quiet voice arrested her:

"Miss Vidal?"

Madolyn turned sharply, recognized the speaker in one swift, horror-stricken glance—and stood rooted to the spot in direst confusion. Then, clutching her cloak close about her, she abruptly retreated into the room. Like *Rosalind*, she might well have cried in her dismay: "Oh, what shall I do with my doubtlet and hose?" but her tongue refused its office.

At a stride, Templeton was across the threshold, had dismissed the waiting maid with a gesture, had closed the door, and stood looking down at the shrinking figure before him. The vivid, painful crimson that had flooded the girl's face ebbed slowly, leaving it tensely white.

"Oh," she gasped, "I didn't dream that you, that any one would penetrate my disguise! And now—I suppose," she flared suddenly, "that you're thoroughly shocked and disgusted. Well, I don't care! I *had* to convince myself that I wasn't wholly a failure, that I could even yet 'make good' if I got the chance. And *I've succeeded!* The editors who disparaged my voice in its prime rhapsodize in this morning's papers over the remnants; Rossoli concedes me the artist; and Santley offers a permanent engagement. If you knew, if you even remotely guessed, what my life has been, how it has hurt to be branded a failure, you'd understand what my poor little triumph means to me, and how, having had it, I can go re-



signedly back to Wortham and Mrs. Maupin's hall bedroom. I've had my hour—my brief hour, Mr. Templeton. Please don't grudge it to me."

"I don't," came the unexpected answer. "I congratulate you rather. Indeed, I envy you, Miss Davis, because you see my own hour hasn't arrived, though I hope it isn't far away." There was a pregnant pause; then, quite without preface, Templeton said suddenly:

"Madolyn, will you marry me?"

Prepared to find herself a pariah in the eyes of this essentially fastidious man of letters, Madolyn stood too stunned to speak.

"I suppose I've loved you all this while," Templeton pursued, analyzing his emotion as if he had been the hero of one of his own problem novels, "but I give you my word I didn't guess it until I saw you as *Azucena*, as *Siebel*. I've lived the life of an anchorite; I've dwelt, since I can remember, in the unreal atmosphere of a musty book world; but, prig as I must have seemed, I begin to believe I'm a man with red blood in my veins instead of a manikin stuffed with sawdust. There must have been hidden fires smoldering under a stoic exterior—fires that have suddenly burst into flame. I've spent my life dissecting the emotions of others; now I'm experiencing a few of my own.

"Madolyn, you creature of fire and snow, I love you—though I didn't know it till you revealed yourself, the real temperamental *you*, when I'd fancied you cold and colorless. Dear, I love you as intemperately, as idiotically, as any youthful Romeo—and I want you to love me just as insanely. Do you

think you could manage it if you tried?" Still Madolyn stood speechless, and, misinterpreting her silence, he blundered on:

"Of course, I'm a selfish beast to ask you to abandon your career, just as you've come into your kingdom—when I know how much it means to you—when I've only my love to offer you——"

At last Madolyn had arrived at the realization that niggard fate, grown suddenly prodigal, was offering her a second—and a sweeter—triumph. The light in her luminous eyes, the radiance of her sparkling face, were a marvel to see.

"Terms satisfactory," she interposed with rather tremulous lightness. "Having declined Santley's offer, I'm free to accept yours. Consider me under contract."

The unwonted coquetry, the witchery, the delicate *diablerie* with which she smiled up at him, left Templeton dazed and doubtful. Was this some new wile of this wonderful new Madolyn; some tantalizing lure, some guiling flight of the bright, elusive butterfly so lately emerged from its familiar brown chrysalis?

For a long, tense moment he stood gazing uncertainly down upon her, till at length that which he read in the eyes that met his bravely, if something shyly, carried conviction to his incertitude. Then temperament triumphed over the ascetic tradition. He stooped, and, with the authoritative impulse of the lover who takes his own, swept her as she stood, in all the bravery of boots and doublet, into his arms.







## Rescuing Charlie

By Lillian Nicholson Shearon

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

YOU had no business hobnobbing with Marion Shivers, in the first place," I stormed, jabbing a spoonful of cracked ice into Charlie's mouth, gaped open like a young bird's at feeding time. "She never was your sort—insidious, insistent social climber that she is!"

Charlie lay back upon the pillows with a moan. "Polly, it's all mother's fault, dosing me with such mixtures when I was a kid that now I can't take a drink of any kind without thinking of castor oil. I'm so infernally temperate that a few nips just to be polite—and I'm snowed under; have to be dug out by a rescue party."

"That's what you need now," I said grimly, "a rescue party."

"There's no way out of this mess," groaned Charlie. "I'll have to marry the girl."

To put it politely, Charlie had not been quite himself when he proposed to Marion Shivers—if propose to her he did.

In trying to get to the bottom of things, I was up against my cousin Charlie's sense of chivalry, a heritage that could be traced back through many generations of Southern ancestry to Cavalier days, when a scramble over my lady's glove was excuse enough for one knight to cleave another knight squarely in two with a sword! Which, you will agree, is a chivalry mighty hard to budge. But Charlie was too

sick to retain even the story of his misfortunes.

He remembers very clearly that he went to a farewell dinner in honor of Joe Binks, who was going West. There were seven at the dinner, so at least seven toasts were proposed and tossed off. And Charlie, because he is very fond of Joe, determined to drink all the toasts if it killed him.

A party call he owed Marion Shivers had been gnawing at his conscience for several days. After the dinner—and the toasts—Charlie felt that there was no time like the present, and soon he found himself in Marion Shivers' dimly lit drawing-room. The night was very cold, and a narrow settee right by the steam radiator looked good to Charlie. Then Marion brought him something hot and pungent to drink, and sat down beside him.

Suddenly he realized that he was a very weary, very sick young man, and that he wanted to rest his head somewhere and die. Marion Shivers' plump shoulder, thinly draped with lace, was the nearest place of vantage, so he pilloved his head in its soft convexity, placed two limp arms around her waist to keep from falling off the slowly revolving seat, and murmured: "Let me die here."

He might have said more—but that is all he is sure of. I admit that even this might be construed as a passionate declaration of love. Be that as it may,

in the pitiless glare of the late morning after, Charlie had read his fate beyond a peradventure in a special-delivery note waiting for his aching eyes. I sneaked it from Charlie's desk and read it—I just *had* to! It gushed:

YOU IMPETUOUS BOY: I am relieving my mind early, you see! Mamma and papa are delighted with our engagement, and will be glad to welcome you this evening as their son. Come to dinner, can't you? Lovingly,  
MARION.

Now I call that indecent haste, barring the worse offense of taking a mean advantage of a man's irresponsible condition.

When Charlie had read that note and realized what it portended, he had collapsed, and was too ill to go and be welcomed into the Shivers' fold that evening.

"You will break that engagement immediately, and tell her why," I ordered, putting a fresh cold compress on his head.

"I can't do a caddish thing like that. Why, the girl's fond of me!"

"Stuff!" I exclaimed.

"Then why should she wish to marry me? I've got nothing. She's got plenty of money and better chances to marry."

"You have just what she hasn't—family. Haven't you seen through those informal, but shockingly expensive, dinners for you and other young men of position? Did you fancy it was because they liked you? The Shivers family have tried to sneak into society by way of the kitchen door. A meal ticket in exchange for a passport into the charmed circle, as it were! That expedient having only partially succeeded, they bind and gag one of their dinner-party victims and force him to marry Marion, and presto, the Shivers family are fixtures in the local Four Hundred!"

"Some more ice!" gasped Charlie.

"You've got to break it off," I re-

sumed pitilessly, and then I stopped with a cry of horror. "Why, you *can't* break it off!"

Charlie sat up in bed. "Why not?" "That girl's tongue!" I cried. "She would circulate such a story about you that the Webster family would be made ridiculous forever. We could never live it down."

"She wouldn't do a thing like that," said Charlie faintly. "Think what a position she would put herself in."

"You don't know her. I went to school with her. Let me see. You will just have to leave town for two or three years, and let the affair die of neglect."

"Leave town for two or three *years*?" he repeated, fixing me with fine gray eyes under heavy, level brows. Charlie is entirely too handsome for his own good. "I'll do nothing of the sort!"

"Oho!" I said, after regarding him for a moment. "And who is the other girl?"

Charlie looked the other way.

"Who is the other girl?" I pursued relentlessly.

"We won't bring her into this discussion," he answered frigidly.

"This is no men's club," I retorted. Then I softened. "If I am to help you out of this mess, I must know everything."

"No use considering her now," he evaded. "I've got to marry Marion Shivers or kill myself."

"You'll do neither. I'll see to that. Now, *who is the other girl*?"

"Lucy Moore," he answered sullenly.

"What! Little Lucy Moore, Uncle Jim's secretary?"

"I knew you all would kick like the mischief because it happens that Lucy must work for her living. But she's the finest, sweet——"

"Lucy! A lovely opinion you have of your family if you think we could object to Lucy because she is self-supporting, instead of being a useless parasite!"

"But, good Lord! haven't you raised the very deuce about my going to the Shivers' affairs just because their ancestors were hodcarriers or something?"

"It isn't a matter of ancestry," I said tartly. "Lucy is in your class, Marion isn't. That's all."

"Well, I'm jinked if I can get head or tail of class distinctions as you women draw them," said Charlie helplessly.

"Lucy is a very sweet girl," I said guardedly, lest I give away the family's pet hope that harebrained Charlie would fall in love with Lucy, who, in addition to demure prettiness, has the sense and tact to bring out all that is best in a man. "Does she know that you care?"

"Do you suppose I'd make love to a girl like her until I had something to offer besides prospects? I've been waiting to get enough ahead so I could defy Uncle Jim and the rest of you, and then I was going to ask her. But now——"

"You've shown remarkable self-control in this one matter," I said crossly.

"I see her every day at the office, don't I? That makes it easier for me."

"That circumstance would make it harder for some men. Charlie Webster, you just *deserve* to marry Marion Shivers!"

"Strike a fellow when he's down."

"Even if you get out of this scrape you must be careful not to let Lucy know a thing about it. She would never, never forgive you."

"She could overlook worse. Besides, *she* may be able to see the funny side of the affair."

"My boy, take heed; a woman has no sense of humor to bear upon the matter of her lover's ever having been engaged to one inferior to herself."

"There goes the woman of it again!" he said dejectedly. "If you're so all-fired subtle, seems to me you might

think of an honorable way out of this trouble for me."

"I will," I said firmly, "even if I have to call on the Relief Society."

"How's that?"

"Look here, old boy," I continued affectionately, "haven't we been pals through thick and thin? And haven't I been pulling you out of trouble ever since I pulled you out of the fire when you were three years old? Do you think I'll stand idly by and see you make a fool of yourself? No, siree, Bob! I'll get you out of this, and honorably, too."

"How, Polly, old girl?" asked Charlie, giving my hand a grateful squeeze.

"I'll tell you in the morning," I skir-mished. "Don't you fret. This is a woman's job. And a woman's ways and means, dear my lord, are not dreamed of in man's philosophy."

## II.

Charlie was as cross as a bear next morning, but I stuck to my guns. I waylaid him in the hall after he had kissed his mother good-by.

"Charlie," I said, grasping his lapels, "if we don't stop her, Marion Shivers will announce the engagement in the afternoon papers."

"Oh, good Lord!" gasped the boy.

"Come in here," I continued, drawing him into the library, "and write her a note at my dictation."

Charlie fell into a chair by the desk, and drew a sheet of note paper toward him. "Well?"

"My dearest girl"——" I began.

"Look here," he growled. "I'll begin it as I darn please. Give me the gist, and I'll write it to suit myself."

I peeked over his shoulder—his pen remained motionless.

I cleared my throat and resumed: "I must ask you to keep our engagement our own little secret."

Charlie shot me a glance full of ven-

om. "Cut out the slush, and tell me what to say."

"Tell her," I said meekly, "that owing to a big deal you have on hand, involving great risks, all your resources, personal and otherwise, the interest and the help of friends—owing to this, it would be very hazardous to have it known that you are to be married soon. Such publicity would, in fact, defeat your very fondest hopes, and endanger both your happiness and hers."

Charlie dropped the pen and leaned back in his chair.

"Tell her that you are not at liberty to divulge the nature of this big deal in which all your chances for future success are centered. So important is it for your engagement to be kept secret for the present, that in case the information leaked out, you would be obliged to deny the report. And I reckon that'll fetch her and the family. They wouldn't have you deny it for all the gold in this world and the next."

Charlie gave me a long look of defeated hopes and ideals blasted. "Well, Polly Webster, if you aren't the limit! A wholesale lie like that from you! And I've stood pat all my life that you were the squarest person, man or woman, I ever knew."

"Of all the ungrateful——" I gasped. "And it isn't a lie, either, Charlie Webster! If getting rid of Marion Shivers and winning Lucy Moore isn't a big deal, involving all your own and your friends' resources—including mine—— And if it—if it—w-w-w-wouldn't bl-bl-blast the ha-ha-ha-happi——"

"Oh, for the love of St. George, don't cry, Polly. There, now! I'm as dull as ditch water—didn't catch on. There never was such a head on a woman's shoulders. That's the smartest, cleverest thing I ever knew anybody to frame up. You're a born diplomat. You ought to be ambassador to somewhere. There, now! Stop

sniveling, like a good girl, and help your old cousin pal out of jail."

Somewhat mollified, I helped Charlie with his letter, which he began without any salutation whatever because he did not know what to call Marion. And he signed it simply with the initial "C." Men are cautious when they are in their right senses! But that letter was a masterpiece, if I do say so as shouldn't, and every word as true as gospel. I dispatched the letter to Marion by special messenger, and sent Charlie to the office with fifty years lifted from his bonny shoulders.

Following my instructions, Charlie contrived that Marion should invite me to her bridge party that evening. With what unholy glee she extended the invitation I could well surmise, for my acceptance meant social recognition by the Webster family. Of course, a young man can go anywhere; but when the women of a family take you up!

Marion greeted me with a firm, cordial handclasp. I am just as sure that she had cultivated that hospitable handshake as I am that she marceled her hair on kid curlers.

I had seen almost nothing of her since our school days, and her personality impressed me anew—a cold, hard, ringing impression, like hailstones on a tin roof. As we shook hands, I looked into her large, unwinking, light-blue eyes, and I felt myself being measured up and down and around, weighed, tested, tied into a scrupulously neat bundle, and shoved into her mental compartment marked "Enemies." I didn't like her, and she knew it, and I knew that she knew.

I was introduced to mamma and papa—accent on the last syllable—who would be very nice middle-aged folk if their daughter would permit them to be natural. The large, handsome house was as well appointed as a professional interior decorator could make it. And Marion herself, with the heavy solidity



*"We put him at his ease, and I started him off on subjects about which he talked well, such as the advantages of this make of car over that."*

of face and figure that presaged a massive middle age, was so expensively gowned, so carefully coiffed, so faultlessly manicured, so punctilious in the little details of social deportment, that she failed of effect from the very lack of just the right amount of disarray and unconventionality that lend charm to a woman.

Sincerity was the crying need of the house, the family, and, yes—the guests. For the people Marion had gathered together were not at all congenial, and I soon divined that all the others, like myself, were there under compulsion of some sort. A lifted eyebrow, a meaning glance, a word here and there, the

scarcely concealed yawns, told the story.

The women I did not know. The men were mostly of that impecunious class of quasi-society men who act as fillers at receptions and rovers at large dances. One was paying for last week's seven-course Shivers' dinner; another was paying in advance for a seat in the Shivers' box at next week's opera. The Shivers family had not yet arrived, and they were using these hangers-on as stepping-stones to higher things. Charlie was the one victim truly representative of the class to which they aspired; they had him in their power, and he must pay up.

Charlie might plume himself on being too chivalrous to break off with Marion peremptorily, but I knew that he *dared* not break off with her. The world will forget scandal and disgrace, but no man has ever lived down a story that made him ridiculous; the world is too fond of laughing.

As the evening progressed, I became acquainted with Marion's particular brand of cleverness. Hers was a well-ordered, well-controlled mind, and calculating to the last degree. We could only boil inside as Marion's little air of possession marked us as almost members of the family.

"How do you like being 'Exhibit A,' devoted slave?" I hissed into Charlie's ear, as we changed tables.

"As well as you like being 'Exhibit B,' dear, intimate friend," he growled back, between closed teeth.

At the next table, my partner was Mr. Shivers. He had just dealt the cards when Marion headed a late arrival our way—Peter Frost. He was introduced, and Mr. Shivers, with evident relief, gave up his place to the young man.

With the advent of Peter, the atmosphere changed. Here, at last, was some one who was glad to be there; some one, at last, who really belonged.

"I was just wondering, Mr. Frost," said the second in hand—a large lady with a wide smile and loads of jet sequins—"how Miss Marion was going to manage one entertainment without you."

"Oh, I generally get in at the finish," said Mr. Frost, pleased as Punch at the raillery.

"I hope you will win out at the finish," giggled the jet sequins, with a significant glance in Marion's direction.

"I may," said he boldly, "and the race may not be so long, either."

"Well, you know the old saying about a faint heart," said she, with the air of having sprung something original.

And then it was that I began to concentrate on Peter.

I saw a stockily built young man with an honest, red face. He was awkward with his hands and feet, very much dressed up in his evening clothes, and published to the world that he scrubbed himself with scented soap. But I liked Peter.

Before the evening was over, I had a little conversation with the lady of the jet sequins. And when the refreshments were being served, I had a tête-à-tête with Peter.

In ten minutes I had turned him wrong side out, and the general plans of Charlie's rescue were formed in my mind.

When Peter and Marion were children, his father and hers had worked together in a large machine shop, and the two families had lived in adjoining cottages. About the time Marion had graduated from high school, her father and Peter's father had patented some sort of spring lock, and subsequently had made loads of money out of it. Peter had been Marion's devoted slave since childhood, and Marion had seemed to reciprocate until the change in their respective fortunes. Then Marion had agreed with papa and mamma that she should marry "family" to justify the expenditure of several thousands of dollars for veneer and varnish at Madame Doré's Select Finishing School for Young Ladies.

While still a boy, Peter had had to shoulder heavy business responsibilities because his father had died, so he hadn't time to get the gloss Marion boasted. Perhaps it was just this in her, or, rather, on her, that held him irresistibly and made him accept meekly his reduction in rank to captain of reinforcements—to be called on only when others gave out.

Peter told me, a complete stranger, the most intimate of his affairs. Marion would not be guilty of such a faux



pas, but at bottom both lacked the same thing that would put them forever beyond the pale of the circle Marion determined to invade—neither had any real delicacy of feeling, any artistic appreciation. Their feelings were made of solid concrete; they could be deeply moved only by gunpowder and a derrick. I could see Marion's blasted hopes flying in the air like little chunks of rock when I should have finished with my machinations. This sounds mean and calculating, but one good turn often swings another without your hand on the crank; and in rescuing Charlie from Marion, I had in mind also rescuing Marion from herself.

Peter had two motor cars—a run-about for two, and a five-passenger touring car. This I found out before we arose to pay our respects to the hostess.

At parting, Marion gave me a smile as dazzling as an icicle in the sun.

"Mr. Webster and I have planned to have you go skating with us to-morrow afternoon," she began. "I hope you will go."

Charlie's eyes pleaded for my acceptance, but just then I spied Peter at Marion's back.

"But Mr. Frost and I are going to ride into the country to-morrow," I said boldly. Whether or not Peter could play up would decide his eligibility as an ally. But I was risking a lot at one throw. "Three o'clock; Mr. Frost?" I inquired.

For the fraction of a second, poor Peter strangled with bewildered embarrassment, and then he repeated mechanically: "Three o'clock."

"I hope the weather will be fine for your ride," quoth Marion, with veiled lids, but an unmistakable edge to her tone.

"Good night, Miss Shivers," I said sweetly. "Such a lovely party. Won't you come with us, Mr. Frost, and finish

what you were telling me—or do you go the other way?"

"My car is at the door," said Peter, "and I'd be glad to take you home."

We accepted, of course. A five-thousand-dollar model with a limousine body beats a street car any cold night.

"Good night, Marion," said Peter.

I felt Marion's eyes stabbing me in the back.

We drove home at an exhilarating pace, my subconscious ears listening to Peter talk about his car's insides and the diseases to which they were subject, my conscious mind planning his subjugation.

"Charlie," I said, after we had bidden Peter adieu, "propose Peter Frost's name at the Mercury Club."

"What for?" demanded Charlie.

"It will enhance his social value."

"I am not interested in Peter Frost's social value," said Charlie coldly.

"I am, at present," I said.

"I don't care if you are. I'll not propose the name of a man who has no business in the Mercury."

"Why not? He is fairly well educated, dresses well, has plenty of money to help the club along——"

"Don't care. He just doesn't stack up with the personnel of the Mercury."

"It would be greatly to your advantage——" I began.

"I don't know what your scheme is, but most emphatically I'll not use my club to further my own interests when the other fellow is out of the question. The Mercury is a gentleman's club."

"You needn't bother yourself and that touchy honor of yours," I snapped. "I'll call in the Relief Society."

"What in the deuce is the Relief Society?"

"Guess again," I cried, as I ran up the stairs.

"And see here," called Charlie, "I don't want you to be going around with this Frost, do you hear?"

"Why not?" I paused on the top step and looked over the banisters.

"He's not in your class; that's why," said Charlie.

"Well, I'm blessed if I can get head or tail of class distinctions as you men draw them!" I mocked.

### III.

It turned warm in the night, so skating was out of the question the next afternoon. I knew Marion's fertile brain would sprout another idea to have Charlie on exhibition at her chariot wheel, so I called up Uncle Jim and told him to keep Charlie at the office all day and half the night. I hinted at a dreadful complication with a female.

"She'll be telephoning him," I warned. "But don't let him go."

Uncle Jim had been somewhat of a blade in his young days, so he put his own construction upon my words and kept Charlie working on a brief until eleven that night, on the pretext that the brief had to be at the printer's the first thing in the morning.

Peter and I went for our ride.

He did not bore me. His was a viewpoint entirely new to me, and I let him talk about the things that interested him. He had no small talk, but he knew more about machinery than any one I had ever met.

It was with some little difficulty that I switched the conversation to more abstract themes, and finally began talking about the way of a maid with a man. I wanted to put a bug in his ear concerning Marion, but Peter was entirely without subtlety, and I found that nothing smaller or less noisy than a June bug would make any impression on his auricular nerve. But finally I put it over that a woman doesn't like a doormat of a man, but that she very quickly finds out whether or not she wants a man if she thinks some other

woman would like to have him. Woman, like man, isn't apt to prize a thing of which she is too absolutely sure.

After these broadsides, Peter looked thoughtful, and asked me to go for another ride the next afternoon! And—and the theater—a box, you know, and—and—supper afterward, the next evening? Though Peter couldn't play the game with finesse, he could with finance! I accepted his invitations.

I took him home with me to five-o'clock tea, and found the Relief Society waiting for us. The society was panoplied for war, and ready to charge; which means it was togged out in its best and most becoming clothes for the edification and subjugation of Peter.

The members of the Relief Society number four, including myself. We are banded together for mutual benefit in a social or a moral crisis, and each girl is pledged to follow unquestioningly the instructions of the member who has raised the trouble signal. The by-laws forbid our using the club to vent personal spite against anybody, so it is purely constructive and beneficial in its scope.

My instructions in this case were: "Be nice to Peter Frost. Make engagements with him. Invite him to your homes. Introduce him to your friends. See that he is received with proper respect and courtesy. He is plain, and has not had many social advantages, but he will not embarrass you. He at least knows when to keep still."

I don't doubt but that Peter had the time of his life in that hour, with four girls deferring to him as if he were the latest social lion with the last cry in roars. Any but the most conceited man appears his best—is his best—when he is the center of tactful and sympathetic attention.

We put him at his ease, and I started him off on subjects about which he talked well, such as the advantages of

this make of car over that. And I made him repeat for the girls his adventures and repentance and return home after he had run away from the parental rooftop when he was nine years old. This recital was full of unconscious humor and pathos, and I saw Clara Green taking it down in her mental notebook to use in her next "human-interest" story. Hilda Fanning immediately got him interested in her boys' club, and monopolized him until I had to interfere.

In short, before Peter got away, he was booked for a week and part of another. Lectures, teas, dinners, dances, visits to the charitable and philanthropic enterprises in which the girls were variously interested—How Peter had any time left for mere business, I cannot calculate. And as for visiting Marion, he couldn't do it, unless he called at six in the morning and had breakfast with her, and I wager she doesn't get up that early!

Charlie came home after eleven that evening, very tired. I demanded an account of his day.

"Work," he answered laconically.

"How do you like work for a change?" I asked.

"Better than going to see Marion, at least," he replied. "I'll square myself with her by sending a box of candy to-morrow."

"Didn't Marion telephone you?"

"Several times, I imagine. But Uncle Jim was in such a rush about his confounded brief that every time anybody called me up he made Lucy answer that I was too busy to come to the phone and would the party please leave the message. Never knew Uncle Jim to be like that before. Don't know what got into him. I wouldn't have stood for it, but I was none too anxious to tackle Marion."

"You're not to send Marion any candy," I said peremptorily. "You must neglect her as politely and as sys-

tematically as you can. And if she has got any sense, she will break the engagement. That will save her all the embarrassment—which is more than she deserves, after the way she has trapped you."

"You proposed to help me out of this mess—bragged of woman's superior logic, and so forth—and now all you do is to tell me to be the crudest kind of a brute and the girl will break it off."

"If you want to marry Marion Shivers, go ahead," I said, with well-feigned indifference.

"I'd rather shoot myself, and you know it," cried Charlie. "But I won't be a brute to any woman. I'd rather go to Marion and tell her like a man that I have concluded that—that we're not suited, and all that. She'd surely let me off then."

"Oh, she'll let you off when she sees she has to," I replied loftily. "Then she'll tell it all over town that she was engaged to you, and that she had to break it off for some reason that will put her in good and you in bad. There's social capital to be made out of this trick engagement. And then good-by little Lucy! She wouldn't have you if you were the first, last, and only man on earth."

"There goes the woman of it again! You undertook to engineer this affair. What are you doing about it?"

"I am doing my part. And if I don't do it well, Marion Shivers won't break off with you, and she won't let you break off with her. So there!"

"But what have you done?"

"Introduced Peter Frost into the society Marion yearns to enter."

"I told you I wouldn't have you going about with this Frost. He's not your sort. What would Sam Randolph think?"

"Sam Randolph hasn't any think coming to him," I replied flippantly.

"And he wouldn't want any if he heard your slang," reproved Charlie.



*"And just then that long-nosed Miss Jenkins walked in to borrow some rubber bands."*

Charlie makes me sick when he puts on those superior, big-brother airs!

I went into the library and slammed the door. In a moment Charlie had rushed upstairs, reached his room, and slammed his door. And then I called up Uncle Jim at his club.

#### IV.

When I asked Uncle Jim if he couldn't send Charlie away for a week or ten days, out of reach of telephone, telegraph, and letters, he blurted out:

"What's that female up to now?"

"She is trying to make Charlie marry her!" I answered.

Uncle Jim whistled. "Does he want to marry her?" asked Uncle Jim.

"No, but he thinks he ought to," I said despairingly.

"Do you think he ought to?"

"I should say not," I bristled. "It's a flagrant case of trickery—blackmail, almost."

Uncle Jim snorted. "I'll send him to Pinecone. That's a lumber camp, and about as inaccessible as a place can be. She'll never get him there. I'll send a surveyor with him and keep him in the thick of a forest until you say the danger is over."

"I think a week will do," I said, "but don't let Charlie know I said anything."

"I understand," growled Uncle Jim. "A week, eh? Chorus girl, eh?" And he

hung up the receiver, grumbling inarticulate things.

Uncle Jim had jumped to the conclusion that Charlie was involved with a member of The Pink Powder Puff Opera Company, which was playing a week's engagement in our town! When Uncle Jim was young, a chorus girl had almost— But never mind about Uncle Jim's escapades.

Charlie's train left so early in the morning he didn't even have time to apologize for his crossness the night before. Uncle Jim's telephone call pulled him out of bed at six o'clock and set him to packing his suit case with his roughest outing clothes.

"I'll have to leave everything in your hands, Polly," said Charlie, with the air

of one conferring a special favor. "You let Marion know where I am, and that letters are out of the question. Tell her I'll see her when I get back. And here is a bunch of my cards; do the proper thing about sending flowers and candy. I've got to let the girl down easy. You'll see to it?"

It was on the tip of my tongue to say: "Marion Shivers will be ready to give you up by the time you get back," but I caught myself up just in time. I answered merely, as I took the cards from him: "I'll see to it." But his attitude in the matter proved my wisdom in getting him out of the way while I played my cards. Nothing I could say or do would pierce the armor plate of his chivalry; and if there was one vulnerable, unprotected spot in it, I could not find it. He simply could not and would not be horrid to a woman, no matter what she did to him.

As to the flowers and candy, I did the proper thing, as Charlie had requested. That evening, when little Lucy Moore got home from her work, she found a five-pound box of Lloyd's best and a huge bunch of violets, both accompanied by Charlie's card. It is highly improper, I think, to send flowers and candy to a girl you dislike, and none to the girl you love!

In the afternoon Marion called me up to find out where Charlie was, though she veiled her question under an invitation to dinner. My engagement book was full to overflowing, I told her airily, and I couldn't crowd another thing in for a week or two. And as for Charlie, he had been called out of town, and would be clear out of civilization for days and perhaps weeks. And no, there was positively no way of communicating with him; perhaps she knew how it was when a man had miles of swamps and forest land to survey?

While I was talking to Marion, there

arrived for me a box of superb American beauties with Peter's card:

Thanking you for one of the pleasantest afternoons of my life.

Really, that was very neat of Peter, don't you think?

Of course, I told Marion about it, and said something nice about her friend, Mr. Frost.

"Peter," answered Marion, in glacial tones, "has lovely taste in flowers. And he is so lavish with them. My room looks like a conservatory all the time."

My three dozen American beauties dwindled into a mere bagatelle; I was not sure, as I turned from the telephone, that I could find them without the aid of a microscope!

During the week following, Peter's pathway was among the roses, so to speak, and he didn't buy all the roses himself, by any means. None of the girls would have fallen in love with Peter short of three lifetimes, but they liked him, appreciated him, treated him royally. And he responded nobly. Each of their courtesies he matched with something delightful, possible only for a man with his money and motors. The members of the Relief Society, in a way, had the time of their lives, too.

Peter met their fathers, and brothers, and friends, and straightway he established himself in their respect, if not in their good graces exactly. A straightforward, honest man, whose intentions are even crudely good, can get along anywhere. Hilda's father, who is very democratic, proposed Peter's name at the Mercury Club, and had him elected somehow. Hilda's father says the club is getting positively effete and needs some sturdy yeoman's blood—and money!—to put new life into it. By the way, Hilda's father is a patent attorney, and Peter has lots of lawsuits on account of infringements and such.

Anyhow, social advancement for a

man isn't the uphill process it is for a woman. The camel will exceed the speed limit getting through the eye of the needle before a woman can break into society. A new man means more fun; a new woman, more competition. So there you are.

Marion must have had an exceedingly dull time of it that week. Deserted by her faithful Peter, ignored by her fiancé, she must have been puzzled and chagrined to the last degree—as I intended she should be. Everything was going to my satisfaction when I chanced to see Lucy, late one afternoon, skimming home after her day's work in Uncle Jim's office.

Lucy did not see me, or any other common, everyday mortal. As I said, she skimmed along, her feet never touching the earth earthy, her rapt gaze intent upon something no one else on that busy thoroughfare was seeing at that moment.

She was wearing Charlie's violets, and her sweet eyes were as deeply blue. The girl was changed, transformed! Even her shabby furs and plain, little coat suit had taken on an air of style and distinction, her demure little hat a new tilt of happy sauciness. There was a triumphant lift to her head, and her slightly parted lips were ready to break into the song: "He loves me! He loves me! He loves me!"

And I had dared to meddle there! I had profaned the sanctuary, I had stolen the chalice, I had made of the temple a house of merchandise!

I experienced a most awful sinking sensation, exactly such as you feel in a storm at sea, when your boat goes down, down, down, and scrapes the bottom of the ocean before it decides to come up again. I turned blind and sick, and just had to rush home and go to bed.

In the exuberance of my enthusiasm, I had ordered two boxes of candy, a

bunch of violets daily, and several current magazines, to be sent to Lucy during the week—all accompanied by Charlie's cards. Suppose, oh, suppose, when Charlie came back, he shouldn't say and do just the right thing under the circumstances! Suppose he should be stupid and tell her he hadn't sent them! Suppose he should blurt out that he was engaged to Marion Shivers! Suppose, and suppose, and suppose! I actually prayed, awful, soul-racking, body-tearing, inarticulate prayers. And I made a solemn vow that if I got out of this mess without causing a murder, or a suicide, or breaking a heart, or spoiling a life, I would never, so long as I lived, so much as lift a finger to interfere with another's affairs.

I felt horrible all next day. Hilda had Peter in tow at the boys' club, in which he was taking an active and a financial interest. I had the day for repentant thoughts and frantic plans. When I telephoned Uncle Jim, and asked him when Charlie would return, he answered that he didn't know, and that he was too busy to be bothered about the young donkey.

I was pacing the floor nervously after dinner, when Charlie bolted in—dusty, travel-stained, burned by the Southern March wind, and positively wild-eyed.

"Now you've done it, Polly Webster!" he cried, without a word of greeting.

"Done what?" I asked, trying to keep my teeth from chattering.

"I'm engaged to Lucy Moore," he announced tragically.

"Thank Heaven!" I cried.

"What? You undertook to disentangle me from one girl, and now you've got me engaged to two!"

"The hair of the dog is good for the bite," I said, beginning to laugh and cry together most foolishly.



## V.

"I've got to get rid of Marion Shivers and announce my engagement to Lucy immediately," said Charlie, running his fingers through his hair and ignoring my remark entirely.

"Now you are talking sense," I replied, wiping my eyes and standing at attention. "In a few days——"

"Few days! I tell you the announcement must be made in a few hours. You know what a gossip Miss Jenkins is. Well, she saw us."

"Saw who? Saw what?"

"Saw Lucy and me. That's what."

"But what of that?"

"I guess I'll have to begin at the beginning," Charlie concluded testily.

"Last night, when we got back to camp at Pinecone for letters and further instructions, I found a note from Lucy."

"What did she say? Let me see it," I entreated.

"I'll do nothing of the sort," he snapped. "It was just the sort of thank-you note a girl like Lucy would write to a man—er—under the circumstances. I saw *your* handwriting on the wall, Polly Webster, and I lay awake all night planning how to explain to Lucy that I wasn't yet free to ask her to marry me—not in so many words, you know, but——"

"Telepathy!" I cried. "That's why I lay awake all night. I felt that you were planning to do something criminally stupid. What *did* you do?"

"I disregarded Uncle Jim's command to stay there another week, and caught the early-morning train for home. And I made a bee line for the office to straighten out things with Lucy, and found her there alone. She was putting on her hat, and——" Charlie paused, with a dazed look. "What has come over Lucy?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, Lucy has always been pretty, but she seemed to be just a quiet,

droopy little child. But when I stepped into the office this afternoon, I saw a woman, grown up, beautiful, stunning! She stood there, a big bunch of violets at her belt——"

"But what did you *say*?" I interrupted the lover's rhapsody.

"Say? There didn't seem to be anything to say. What I had planned flew out of my head. I was glad to see her, and she was glad to see me. All at once she seemed to know how much I cared, and how long I had cared—and I went toward her and she came toward me—and before I knew it——"

"She was folded to your heart," I finished, in bored accents.

"And just then that long-nosed Miss Jenkins walked in to borrow some rubber bands."

"Didn't she knock?"

"Not that I know of," said Charlie weakly. "But she'll get her hammer out now, all right. Before noon tomorrow, it will be all over that office building that I am playing fast and loose with my uncle's secretary, unless we anticipate her by an announcement in the morning paper."

"But goodness! You haven't even seen Lucy's mother and father——"

"Yes, I have. I went home with Lucy and clinched things with the old folks. And I don't see any use in waiting so long to be married. We might as well——"

"You're in a precious big hurry all at once, after keeping little Lucy on the waiting list for three years while you dillydallied with first one and then the other, enjoying your bachelor freedom. What are you going to do about Marion Shivers?"

"That's your funeral," he said, with exasperating calmness.

"I didn't get you engaged to Marion."

"No, but you complicated things by getting me engaged to Lucy."

"I had to," I wailed. "I couldn't do a thing with you unless I tied you hand and foot to Lucy. You were so afraid of hurting Marion's feelings. But I wasn't counting on Miss Jenkins and her scandalous tongue. While you were asking Lucy's parents for her, what were you proposing to do about Marion?"

"I forgot all about Marion until I came home and saw you," he replied imperturbably. "At first the thought of her gave me a decided jolt. But now it seems simple enough. Lucy and I will frame up an announcement for the morning paper, and you can square it all with Marion afterward. You're clever enough for that."

"Oh, am I? Thanks," I replied sarcastically. Truth to tell, things were coming my way a bit too rapidly. "How do you suppose I can make it all right with Marion?"

"What was your original plan?"

"To lessen your desirability as a husband in proportion as I increased Peter's," I answered. "Disgruntled at your neglect, and puzzled because you made no allusion to the engagement, Marion would finally break off with you and be glad to grab Peter, who has been taking on new value every day in her eyes."

"What's the matter with that plan now? I'm not very valuable to Marion if I marry Lucy, and I guess Peter is worth as much as he is going to be."

"I feel it in my bones that something will go wrong; there hasn't been time enough. You will just have to brazen it out that you don't remember anything about being engaged to Marion. Telephone her about you and Lucy, and then I'll send Peter to her with instructions to propose once more. She'll take him as a consolation."

"That's pretty rough on Frost," said Charlie sympathetically.

"Oh, she cares for him enough," I said stoutly, to bolster my fast-weaken-

ing courage. "There's Peter now," as I heard the jangle of our old-fashioned doorbell. "Charlie, you slip into the library and wait. I'll lead up to the matter, give Peter his instructions, and send him to Marion. While he is on his way there, you or I can telephone Marion about your engagement to Lucy, and presto! Peter will strike while the iron is hot—and all will be well."

I pushed Charlie into the library, and drew the portières just as Peter was ushered in.

"Miss Webster—Miss Polly," began Peter, in an agitated voice, "there's something I must say to you, and I've got to say it quick, or I'll never get it out."

"But won't you sit down, Mr. Frost?"

"No, thank you, Miss Polly—if it's just the same to you, I'll stand up."

He thrust his hands into his pockets, drew them out again, cleared his throat nervously, and proceeded:

"When I first began going with you, it was to spite another girl. Not exactly spite, either, but you know what I mean. I wanted to let her know there were others and that she couldn't treat me just any old way and I'd stand for it. I wanted to teach her a lesson. It didn't occur to me that I wasn't being just fair to you, and——"

"But I assure you I understood all the time," I hastened to interrupt.

"Not everything," contradicted Peter. "You didn't think that I might get caught in my own trap, did you? I didn't."

"You mean——" I faltered.

"I mean that I never knew the real thing until I met you and your friends. I never knew that women could be so big, and fine, and so—so—so—— I never knew there could be such women. And as for you—you are as high above all the others as—as—as the stars are above the earth. Miss Webster—Miss



*"Mr. Frost, will you please go now, and let me think it over? I'll—I'll talk to you some other time about—about this."*

Polly, I'm telling you that I love you, and I'm asking you to marry me—only I don't seem able to get it out!"

"Oh, Mr. Frost!" I cried aghast, and covered my face with my hands.

"I know it is sudden," he apologized, "and I'm not asking you for your answer right now. But I'm a plain, blunt man, and I couldn't go on without letting you know just how I felt. I know I'm not your equal in any sense of the

word, and the most I can offer you is a mighty easy time. But if you can care a little bit about me, you can make anything you want to out of me."

"Mr. Frost, will you please go now, and let me think it over?" I begged. "A great deal has happened to-day to agitate me. I'm hardly myself—I'll—I'll talk to you some other time about—about this."

"Why, sure I'll go," said Peter ac-

commodatingly. He crushed my two hands in his hot, moist palms—and was gone.

I staggered toward the portières and swept them aside. Charlie stood there with folded arms and a Napoleonic frown.

"You heard?" I gasped. "You heard?"

"Yes, I heard! The red-faced boulder daring to propose to you! It was all I could do to keep from throwing him down the steps!"

"Let me think! Let me think!" I moaned.

## VI.

"It seems to me, Polly," vouchsafed Charlie, striding into the parlor, frown, folded arms, and all, "it seems to me you've done enough thinking. It's time for me to do some acting."

"What can you do?" My tone was desperate.

"Go to Marion Shivers with the plain truth. I'll tell her she misunderstood something I said when I was not myself, and that this farce of an engagement has gone far enough, that I'm going to marry Lucy Moore in a very short while." Charlie's voice rang with the courage of the knight *sans peur, sans reproche*.

"You'll tell her that without regard to what she might do afterward?"

"If I marry Lucy, what can Marion do but talk?"

"Marion will do her talking first, and then I'm not sure you will marry Lucy. The sort of story Marion can get up and substantiate—you don't know how it would hurt and disillusion a girl like Lucy."

"I can't think any woman is as venomous as you make out Marion to be."

"I dare say she has her good qualities," I replied, "but her one consuming ambition is for social advancement. Strike her there, and she will fight back to the finish. I went to school with her,

and I remember what she said and did because the girls wouldn't admit her to the sorority. I've robbed her of Peter, and if you jilt her—I don't know what she will do, but you can bet your bottom dollar she will do *something*!"

"I don't care what she says—I can deny it, and I guess a few people will believe what I have to say. When it comes to a show-down, I never have been really engaged to Marion Shivers. I've tried to be decent to her and let the affair die a natural death and not do anything to embarrass her. But if she tries any scheme that is going to affect Lucy, I'll deny everything she says."

Suddenly I clapped both hands to my head. "Charlie," I almost screamed, "that letter! You virtually acknowledged the engagement in that letter to Marion!"

"I'd forgotten that confounded letter—that letter written, Polly Webster, at your dictation, you will remember."

"I remember," I answered, too miserable to be incensed at his base ingratitude. "That letter is more than compromising. She can prove anything she wants to claim by that letter."

"Good Lord!" Charlie ejaculated. "You don't think she would sue me for breach of promise?"

"No, surely not. But she will try to make social capital out of this affair. She can show parts of the letter to prove she was engaged to you. She can distort the truth so as to make you ridiculous. Or she can say she threw you over and you took Lucy for spite or for consolation. 'Oh, I don't care what she says, as far as you or the Webster family are concerned, but I won't have Lucy hurt! I won't!'"

Thereupon I burst into tears, adding more zest to the occasion.

Charlie tore at his hair.

"Talk about a pretty kettle of fish!" he cried wildly. "I must publish to the world what Lucy is to me forthwith

and immediately, to silence Miss Jenkins' scandalous tongue. And I must maintain a discreet silence on the same subject to still Marion Shivers' venomous tongue. Now what in the name of common sense *shall* I do?"

"Don't do anything just this minute," I begged, "but help me to plan."

"Well, be quick about it," he acceded grudgingly. "Do you realize I haven't had any dinner, nor a shave for two days, nor a bath for a week? That's what I came home for—to get into civilized shape. I've got to go and see Lucy."

"Tell me this: Have you and Marion referred to your farce of an engagement in any way, except in that letter?"

"Haven't seen Marion but once since—the evening of her bridge party, you know. I didn't see her alone. No, not a word was said about it. When I saw it coming, even indirectly, I shied."

"Except for that letter, the subject has been ignored entirely? Nothing said about it over the telephone?"

"Not a word."

"Then forget the whole affair. Never remember anything about it. Charlie, your salvation lies in remembering to forget."

"But that damning letter, Polly?"

"That letter must be disqualified."

"How in thunder——"

"I have the glimmer of an idea. Don't disturb me. Now go and get your dinner, and your bath, and your shave, and then sing love songs into your lady's listening ear. But wait just one more day before you announce your engagement to Lucy. One day."

"I believe you've gone clean daft, Polly Webster, but I'll do as you say, simply because I don't know anything better to do."

"And remember to forget," I added impressively.

"Say, Polly, get Mary to rustle me

up some dinner—just anything—while I dress. I'm late now."

Charlie was already forgetting. For singleness of mind, nothing can equal that of a man in the first joy of love fully awakened and fully reciprocated. One week ago Charlie, with his absurd sense of chivalry, was ready to out-don Don Quixote for the sake of a girl who had shamelessly trapped him. Now, two thoughts chased each other in a circle through his brain: "I love Lucy, and Lucy loves me." And the rest of the world could go hang itself by the neck until it was dead, for all he cared.

As soon as Charlie was gone, I ransacked his desk in the library, and at last found Marion's note:

YOU IMPETUOUS BOY: I am relieving my mind early, you see! Mamma and papa are delighted with our engagement——

And with inward rage, I sat me down and wrote a cool reply to that note for Charlie to copy; the reply I would have dictated to Charlie the week before if my foresight had been as good as my hindsight, as my old black nurse used to put it.

More rummaging among my cousin's disordered papers revealed a rough copy of the letter we had written to Marion. This I confiscated, to put into immediate use.

I didn't relish the task I had set myself, but I had gone too far to turn back; I must keep on running until I reached the goal. Nevertheless, beating an unprincipled woman at her own ignoble game was mighty distasteful business.

But the thought of Lucy, little, flowerlike Lucy, spurred me on. And leaving Lucy out of the question, how helpless was Charlie! How completely at the mercy of an unscrupulous woman is a truly chivalrous man, if she chooses to circulate stories about him in which her own dignity is delicately involved. He can punch another fellow's head

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for compromising his honor ever so little; but he cannot speak the plain truth and say: "No, that girl did not throw me over for that cause or any other cause. She is lying. I never was engaged to her, never said a word of love to her in my life." No, he can only smile a cryptic, gentlemanly smile, and blow a few puffs of cigar smoke into the air, while inwardly wishing a certain girl were a man just for one good five minutes of time!

I spent the entire evening telephoning and writing.

At eleven-thirty there was a called meeting of the Relief Society at my home. The other three members rushed from the theater, and made their escorts sit out in the hall while we had a short and stormy session in the library.

The plan I proposed met with instant objection. Daisy Eubanks declared it was utterly impossible—the thing could not be done at a single day's notice. Hilda Fanning, good sport though she is generally, maintained stubbornly that she would not wear trousers. It was all right when she was at college—but now! She simply would not and could not, and that's all there was to it.

"You know Hilda's been banting to get the new svelte figure," volunteered Daisy, "and trousers are a bit *too* illuminating."

Hilda slapped her.

"If it's the matter of life and death your face seems to indicate," said Clara Green at last, "and you must carry the thing through, Polly—get Peter to do it. He'd die for you."

"Peter!" I cried, clapping my hands. "That is the very refinement of expediency!"

"Refinement of expediency," repeated Clara, whose literary nose is always on the scent. "That sounds well; I'll take it down." And she drew a tiny notebook from somewhere about her person.

In the end they promised to do my bidding, and departed to their theater suppers with their amused and highly mystified escorts.

Charlie came in just as the girls went out.

"Polly, you look all in," he said, with a new solicitude. "You'd better go to bed, girl."

I shook my head.

"I think I can manage things better if you will do as I ask and not argue," I said, in a dead-tired voice. "Copy and sign this." I pushed toward him the note I had written Marion.

He complied without question.

"And when you say your prayers to-night," I continued, "thank your good angel for guiding you to begin that fatal letter to Marion without any salutation, and to end it without any signature except your initial."

"I feel in a prayerful mood to-night," said Charlie dreamily, reverently. "And I feel as if I ought to do some sort of penance for the time I've wasted with girls I didn't care a rap for when I was loving Lucy all the time."

"And Lucy was loving you," I put in crisply.

"I'll make it up to her," he said valiantly.

"You ought to," I counseled. "And will you please explain to me how you could go about with a girl like Marion when you loved a girl like Lucy?"

"I couldn't show Lucy any attention until I felt I was in a position to ask her to marry me," explained Charlie. "And a man's got to have some diversion, hasn't he? And Marion seemed such a safe and sane sort, you know. Entertained royally, always had a jolly crowd around—you didn't have to see her alone. She let you know she didn't expect you to be in love with her or to make love to her. All you had to do was to go to her parties and pay your party call in company with a dozen others, and then the whole bunch was in

good for a bid at the next Shivers' pow-wow. And then you'd pay up your obligations by taking Marion to the theater once a year and escorting her to places when she asked you."

"A *very* safe sort of girl!" I interrupted ironically.

"Well, you know, Polly, there are lots of girls, nice girls, too, who are always egging a fellow on. They have a way of sitting down beside you, so that your arm just naturally slips— Or they stand up close to a fellow and lift their faces in that kiss-me-quick way. What I mean to say is, that a man who wants to be true to another girl or to an ideal—he's just naturally going to avoid that kind."

"I hope so," I said, in disgust.

"But right here I want to put in a good word for that sort of girl," said Charlie unexpectedly. "She's foolish, and her standards are not very high, but you can kiss her and apologize and get out of it. But there's a worse sort in society."

"Namely?"

"The girl who flimflams you with the friendship racket. I don't mean to say that there aren't some girls who are good friends and good fellows, and all that. But the friendship of some girls is merely a clever trap to catch a man when he isn't looking."

"But that's a truth you can't beat into his head," I added. "He has to get his foot in the trap. And as I have a great deal of work to do to-night, I'll excuse you, Mr. Webster."

Charlie turned at the door. "Don't you think, Polly," he said tentatively, "that you have kept Sam Randolph on the rack about long enough? Why don't you make up with him?"

"Oh, if he should come and ask me," I said wearily, "I'd forgive him."

"For what you did," teased Charlie.

"We won't go into that," I snapped.

The rest of the night I spent writing. Reams upon reams of paper I used, but

at six o'clock in the morning, when the milk wagons began rattling down the avenue, my work as an author was ended. I slipped to my room, fell across the bed with my clothes on, drew a coverlet over me, and slept until eight.

Then I arose and began the hardest day's work of my life.

## VII.

That evening, the patronesses of the boys' club gave their usual spring entertainment. This time it took the form of society vaudeville, and the principals had been rehearsing strenuously for three weeks. No wonder the girls objected when I proposed putting on a playlet with only one day for study and rehearsal. But I did it, and a large and very fashionable audience was there to applaud home talent—and to contribute to a very worthy philanthropy.

The first part of the program, Peter and I, with Charlie and Lucy, occupied a box just opposite the orchestra chairs in which Marion Shivers sat with her mother and father. We exchanged bows of elaborate friendliness. Peter fidgeted slightly, but Marion sat as impassive as marble—and as pale. She was there at my invitation, and I had insisted cordially that she be a guest also at an informal supper after the performance. She had accepted with the readiness I had expected.

The first numbers of the program finished, I went behind the scenes with Peter; for Peter had the one male rôle in a playlet of which I was the anonymous author and the stage manager and the prompter. The female rôles were taken by the other three members of the Relief Society. After studying and rehearsing all day long, the five of us were ready to go to pieces if any one should say "boo." This state of nervous tension insured a smooth performance, even without my being right at the

ear of each actor behind the canvas back drop.

I had intended to take a part myself and have Hilda do the male rôle—she always took boy parts at college—but her refusal pressed me into service as stage manager, and gave the rôle of *Clarence*, the hero, to Peter.

Peter hasn't an atom of histrionic ability. He didn't *play* the part; he simply *did* the part, as plain, blunt Peter, and his very naturalness made him excruciatingly, killingly funny. He'll never be able to do it again. He did not know what he was in for when he took the part to please me; but once before the footlights, he was like a man who has been unexpectedly precipitated into deep water—he must swim out or drown!

The plot concerned a young man who had proposed to the wrong girl in a darkened conservatory, and his efforts to get free so he could propose to the right one. He writes a letter to his fiancée, beginning:

I must ask you to keep our engagement a secret for the present.

Then the letter sets forth the reasons, being word for word identical with the letter Charlie and I had written to Marion. In his confusion he sends the letter to the girl he loves instead of to his fiancée. Complication after complication follows, and at last all is explained in, I must confess, the usual stereotyped manner. But during the play, that letter is read out three different times.

The first time it raised a ripple of laughter, the second a few appreciative chuckles, but the third time, with the situation and business that accompanied it, the reading of that letter simply convulsed the audience, and I suspect everybody present could have quoted it word for word.

The letter in Marion's keeping was thoroughly disqualified, but I still had

to find out what she might do in spite of this, and I was scared half to death until the time should come for me to play my last trump. I could tell, after one look at Charlie, that he was perfectly furious with me for writing the play and using that letter. As if I had done it for my own edification! And I was afraid he would balk at carrying out the rest of my instructions, now that he had seen the play.

While the program was being completed, I stood in the wings with Peter and heard him receive the congratulations of everybody behind the scenes. The little play had been a success, and Peter's "acting" was lauded to the skies. And while he was feeling good, I let him down as easily as I could.

It was mean, I know, to use him that way and then give him the mitten; but Peter wasn't in love with me—he just imagined that he was. And he imagined that he was pretty badly cut up, too, even after I told him that I had been engaged to Sam Randolph for three years, off and on. Off for the present.

And while I was getting into my wraps in the entry, Charlie stepped up to me and said he could never look himself in the face again after having been even an unconscious party to such a frame-up to humiliate a girl, and he would be hanged if he was going to humiliate Marion further by carrying out the rest of my schemes.

I was fairly ready to cry, but I didn't have time. I just told him that he could make a fool of himself if he wanted to, but that maybe if he spent the next five minutes in sober thought he might get it through his thick skull that what I had proposed was the kindest thing he could do for Marion.

Lucy came up and wanted to know what we were quarreling about. We both answered, "Nothing," and sulkily enough we made our way to Peter's car. Marion had sent her parents on



*"Miss Shivers," said Charlie blandly, "I found this in my desk this evening. I must have sent you something else in its place. I owe you a thousand apologies."*

home, and rode with us. I put Lucy in front with Peter, and I sat behind between Charlie and Marion. And I thanked my stars that we had only a few blocks to go, for the situation was awful. Lucy was the only one in the car not under a terrific strain.

Our guests followed immediately, and a group of chattering girls soon chased away Peter's moroseness. Marion's face was a study when she saw

Peter holding the center of the stage at my party as successfully as he had held it an hour before at the theater.

Marion kept close at my side, for she was pretty much a stranger in that company, and her assurance began going down like the mercury in the thermometer when an east wind wails around the corner.

I wiped my forehead twice across with my handkerchief, which was the

signal we had agreed upon, and Charlie came toward us with Lucy at his side. I guess he had been thinking it over, for he played his part very smoothly.

"Miss Shivers," said Charlie blandly, fishing into an inside pocket and drawing out a thin letter in an unaddressed envelope, "I found this in my desk this evening. I must have sent you something else in its place. I owe you a thousand apologies. I do hope the delay hasn't caused you any—any embarrassment."

He handed her the envelope, and perfunctorily she asked leave to read the letter it contained. We nodded, and I deliberately turned my back to keep from seeing her face—or showing mine to her. But a long mirror opposite reflected her every movement, and I watched, fascinated, while ostensibly listening to Lucy's soft patter.

Marion first pulled forth her own effusion to Charlie:

YOU IMPETUOUS BOY: I am relieving my mind early, you see! Mamma and papa are delighted with our engagement—

She went white, and her hand shook as she drew out the other inclosure. This is what she read:

MY DEAR MISS SHIVERS: I am returning the inclosed note which evidently you sent me by mistake. May I claim the privileges of a friend to wish you much happiness, and to congratulate the fellow for whom the note is intended? Sincerely,

CHARLES WEBSTER.

Her pallor deepened, she reeled slightly, and a quick spasm distorted her features. But she was game, a good loser. She pulled herself together immediately, and rejoined us with her facial muscles stiffened into a smile:

"You sent me instead of this," she said in a voice that strained to be light, "the letter, a copy of which was used in the play this evening. And I have had no opportunity to ask you what you meant by it."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Charlie, with fervent emphasis. "Strange that both of us should have mixed our notes!"

"Very strange," she answered. "But it doesn't matter now. Fortunately, the man for whom this note was intended is present to-night."

And with that, she swept off with a haughty lift to her chin, walked straight up to Peter Frost, and put the letter into his hands! Yes, she did!

"Well, what do you think of that?" I ejaculated.

"I think," said Charlie, holding out a conciliating hand, "that you women know each other pretty well."

"I think we do," I answered, shaking hands with Charlie and putting an arm around Lucy, "and that's why I love Lucy."

"Whatever are you two so mysterious about?" inquired Lucy.

"Nothing, dear," I answered. And Charlie added: "Maybe, Polly, maybe she *did* intend that note for Frost in the first place!"

"I give you up!" I cried. And we went in to supper.

Lucy's and Charlie's engagement was announced with the first course, and a toast was drunk in Apollinaris. There was quite a bit of good-natured chaffing about Charlie's being unable to drink anything stronger without forgetting who, where, and why he was. This fitted in beautifully with Charlie's high disregard of what had happened the night of Joe Binks' dinner.

Peter's was the only unhappy face at the festal board, though I had placed him beside Marion, and she was exerting herself to the utmost to win back his interest. Having one of his antediluvian proposals accepted in this sudden and offhand manner did not accord well with his newly acquired dignity and self-esteem.

Marion would have to win him back



if she got him at all—that was plain. And we girls had stuffed Peter so full of high ideals that Marion would have to struggle the rest of her life to live up to what Peter thought a woman should be. I felt rather sorry for her. I believe she really cared for Peter, though she may have cared more to go with him through that sacred portal, "society," where he already had the *entree*. But how she would have to scramble to keep her foothold, there! I felt bedraggled from the experiences I had passed through that week, and it was with the idea of wiping some of the mud from my garments by starting her on the road that would lead her back to Peter's good graces, that I spoke to her across the table.

"Miss Shivers," I said, "I'll be going away soon. I wonder if you won't take my place on the committees and help Mr. Frost with his new schemes to benefit the boys' club?"

Peter looked at her steadily as she paused to weigh my words. My glance held hers—and somehow we understood some things that did not have to be put into words. Women don't have to *talk* to each other in order to tell the things that mean the most!

"Thank you," she replied, quite sin-

cerely and simply. "I think I should find such philanthropy interesting."

As the guests were rising from the table, the doorway suddenly framed the ghost of Sam Randolph. That put the finishing touch upon the strenuous, nerve-destroying events of the last forty-eight hours. The ceiling came down, the walls closed about me, and I felt myself slipping out of my chair into nowhere.

It was Sam Randolph in the flesh—Charlie had telegraphed for him!—who fished me out from under the table and brought me to in the library, and let me have hysterics for five minutes on his nice, soft, black shoulder. He thought it was joy over our reconciliation. And I was too tired to deceive him.

"Frost—Shivers." The announcement will read like a weather report!

Poor, dear Peter! It does seem that he deserves a better fate. And yet, when all is said, I reckon Marion is the girl for him. She speaks his language—his dialect, in fact. And she is the only girl before whom Peter can take off his spiritual collar and sit in his mental stocking feet. And there are times when plain, blunt Peter will just have to take 'em off!





# The LATE MR. MORRIS

BY-

Frank X. Finnegan

Author of "Standing Guard," "The Next of Kin," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

WHEN Lizzie Hickey encountered Birdie McMullen waiting for a trolley car with a suit case beside her on the pavement, a bag clutched in one hand, a roll under her arm made up of an umbrella and a white parasol, she should have known better than to ask questions. Miss McMullen had been struggling with these impedimenta all the way from her home, because Billy Sheehan was late and she had finally decided to go to the station alone. Now that the trolley was delayed, there seemed some danger she might miss her train, and she was in no mood for trifling.

"Hello, Birdie!" Miss Hickey called. "Startin' on your vacation?"

Miss Hickey had a penchant for remarking on the obvious.

Miss McMullen looked down the street for the tenth time to see whether the car was in sight, looked back over her shoulder for the errant Mr. Sheehan, and finally brought her gaze to bear on Lizzie.

"No; I've just got a few things here I thought I'd stake the Salvation Army to this morning," she said. "They bother you to death if you don't slip 'em every little while. It's a nuisance to have your old clothes pile up around the house."

"Oh, is that so?" Miss Hickey re-

torted. "I s'pose you're terribly bothered that way. It must be awful!"

"Yes, you're lucky you miss it," Birdie said, looking Lizzie over critically. "It saves a lot of strain on the brainpan, and that's something everybody can't stand."

Hurried footsteps behind them caused both young women to turn at that moment to behold Mr. William Sheehan, red-faced and apologetic, hastening toward them.

"I'm awfully sorry, Birdie," he began explaining, while he was twenty feet away, "but I got tied up with a long-distance call just as I was going to get away, and I had to beat it up here at a mile a minute. There's no chance of your being late for the train, though," he added, watch in hand.

Miss Hickey smiled acidly on the situation.

"You'll excuse me if I run along, won't you, Birdie?" she said. "I can see where you and Billy have an argument coming."

Sheehan nodded curtly in acknowledgment of her presence, and Miss McMullen calmly ignored it.

"Oh, never mind, Billy," Birdie said. "When it comes to carrying three or four satchels and things, I'm some pack horse, and I might as well get in a few light training stunts before I begin row-

ing boats on this sparkling lake we've been reading about."

The delayed trolley car turned the corner two blocks above them, and, as Sheehan gathered up Miss McMullen's luggage and prepared to pilot her to a seat, Miss Hickey hastened on her way to spread the tidings that Birdie was going away. Billy finally got aboard in the trail of the indignant queen of Halsted Street, bestowed the hand bags where they would ruffle her least, and dropped into a seat beside her.

"Honest, if I hadn't talked so much about this vacation thing and promised to send postal cards to a lot of folks around here, I'd ditch the whole business right now and put in a week in a hammock on the back porch," Birdie declared. "Everybody seems to be trying to crab it, from the boss, who asked me Saturday night to stick around for another week because somebody in the office has a toothache, down to you, that nearly made me miss the rattler. Ma got out on the wrong side of the bed this morning, and got it all fixed in her head that I'm going to be drowned, so she was weeping around the house like the plumbing was busted. And my kid sister dug up a calendar to show me it was the thirteenth of the month and a bum day to make a start on anything."

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about that," Sheehan said earnestly. "You're going to have a grand little time. You've got a good rest coming to you, Birdie, and Haven Lake is just the spot for you to get it. I'll go up on the early train Saturday afternoon with three or four of the fellows, and we'll simply kill it until Monday morning."

Miss McMullen looked at him apathetically.

"Yes, that listens all right, Billy," she said, "but something tells me that it won't go through. I don't know why, but I feel that there's been too many yellow flags out against this vacation of mine, and I ought to take the tip and

get off the track before something hits me."

"Cheer up, Birdie," was Billy's sapient suggestion. "You've got a week to do all your fretting up at Haven Lake. Don't begin until you get there, anyhow."

When he parted with her in the railroad station, as the train pulled out, Birdie was still unreconciled to the Fates that seemed to pursue her, and Sheehan returned to the city wondering whether, after all, there was anything in the theory of woman's intuition, concerning which he had heard so much at various times.

Miss McMullen meanwhile found herself seated opposite a nervous little woman whose drab and faded attire singularly matched her work-weary countenance, and who adjusted and rearranged her satchels and bundles half a dozen times in the first five minutes. Then she settled back in the corner of her seat, opened her hand bag, and peered into it, pawed wildly among its contents a few moments, and uttered a little shriek of dismay. Birdie looked across at her in mild interest.

"My pocketbook!" the little woman exclaimed. "It's gone! I've been robbed!"

"Oh, maybe not," Birdie suggested soothingly. "Have another little peek in the grip, there. Maybe it's hiding under a handkerchief."

"No, no—it's gone!" the woman wailed, emptying the contents of the hand bag into her lap. "My ticket—my money—What am I going to do?"

Birdie leaned across the aisle to get the particulars. Other people's troubles were her forte; she would have felt strangely idle with none to solve for a time.

"When did you have your pocketbook last?" she asked.

"It was in the lunch room at the rail-



MAVO  
BUNKER

*"You'll excuse me if I run along, won't you, Birdie?" she said.*

road station," the little woman explained. "I went in for a sandwich and a cup of coffee—I remember having my purse at the cashier's desk, paying my check. But it isn't here now," she added helplessly.

"It's a ten-to-one you walked away from it," Miss McMullen said, "and if that's the case, you might as well kiss it good-bye. There are no pocketbooks left lying around in railroad stations with a 'Take One' sign on 'em more than an hour or two."

"But my ticket is gone!" the other woman sobbed. "And my money! I'll

be put off the train before I get to Blysburg Junction!"

"Not while you've got your voice you needn't be put off any train," advised Miss McMullen. "Can't you wire some of your people at Blysburg Junction to meet you with some money and settle with the conductor, or something like that? Get your brain to working. You'll have to think up something, you know."

The mourning female dabbed her eyes and looked at Birdie solemnly.

"Why, I haven't any people at Blysburg Junction," she said. "I'm going up there to get married."

Miss McMullen was slightly taken aback by this unexpected declaration, but she rallied and

returned to the charge.

"Well, there you are!" she declared confidently. "You're in strong. When his nobs comes along for the tickets, tell him to stand aside until we get to Blysburg and your friend husband will fix everything up. Why, you don't need any money if you're going to be married. Let George settle!"

The other looked around the car consolately, and gave a violent start as she descried the conductor in the offing, examining tickets.

"I don't know how that would be," she said timidly. "I—I don't know

much about Mr. Morris—that's the man I'm going to marry. You know, I've never seen him yet."

"What!" Birdie exclaimed. "You've never seen him? Well, you certainly *are* jumping off the dock with your eyes shut! What's the idea of the grab-bag business?"

"Well, you see, I'm a widow," the little woman explained. "Mrs. Sells, my name is. And so I seen this ad in the newspaper of Mr. Morris, that he wanted a wife to live in the country and help on a farm, and so I answered it, and—and we got engaged."

"Fine business!" Miss McMullen said admiringly. "You're a sort of a mail-order bride, eh? And couldn't lovey dove tear himself away from the cows and sheep long enough to beat it down to the city and get you?"

"He wrote me to come ahead and he'd meet me at Blysburg—he's so busy on the farm he couldn't get away. And now he'll be waiting, and I won't be on the train. I don't know where I'll be," she added, in a despairing wail.

The businesslike voice of the conductor at their elbows made them jump.

"Tickets, please," he said, and Birdie handed hers over, to give the trembling Mrs. Sells one more minute of grace. She spent it in rummaging madly through the hand bag, which had already been emptied into her lap and refilled twice.

"I—I've lost my pocketbook," she quavered, when he turned to her, "with my tickets, and money, and everything."

The conductor looked down at her sharply.

"Lost it?" he said. "Well, you've got half an hour to find it. If you haven't got your ticket when we get to Marshall, you'll have to get off."

"Wait a minute—wait a minute," Miss McMullen interposed. "You're not going to dump this woman off in a strange town without a cent in her pocket because she's been touched for

her purse in one of your railroad stations?"

"I certainly am, unless she has a ticket," the conductor declared. "How do I know she lost her pocketbook? Maybe she never had a ticket. I'm not supposed to believe all I hear."

"Oh, is that so?" said Birdie. "Well, did you ever hear that it might help you along in your business to go through the motions of acting like a gentleman? You can believe that any time you hear it. Did you ever hear that the conductors of this road are not expected to insult women passengers who don't happen to have a man along to punch you in the nose? That's another one you can believe if it's ever slipped to you, and I'm going to see that you get a little private information on one of the letterheads of the road. See?"

Mrs. Sells was weeping softly, and the conductor blinked down at the self-reliant Miss McMullen in surprise.

"Well, I know what my rules are," he growled, moving up the aisle. "I've got to have that ticket if this party rides beyond Marshall. That's all."

"See here, Mrs. Sells," Birdie said, after a silence of a few moments, "I don't know you, but I'm going to take a chance on you. I wouldn't want to see any human being ditched at a tank like Marshall without a bean even to send a telegram. I'm going to Haven Lake—away up beyond Blysburg Junction—and I'll stake you to the fare to Blysburg and get it from the happy bridegroom when we get in there. Maybe we'd better send him a telegram, so he'll be sure to have the change in his clothes. I won't have much time for congratulating him."

The bride-to-be wiped her eyes speedily, and a half smile began to beam on her faded face.

"Oh, would you?" she exclaimed joyfully. "How can I thank you?"

"Don't mind thanking me," Birdie



*"Did you ever hear that the conductors of this road are not expected to insult women passengers who don't happen to have a man along to punch you in the nose?"*

said. "It's the same as heaving a rope to somebody going down for the third time. And besides, I wouldn't want to see your wedding day spoiled," she added. "They tell me that's fierce luck."

When the conductor came back, ready for battle, Birdie counted out the four dollars and sixty cents that were necessary to carry Mrs. Sells to the waiting arms of her Henry, and at Marshall she dispatched a telegram for the bride, telling him she was on her way, despite the loss of her purse, through the kindness of a fellow passenger.

"It isn't that I want to press Mr.

his bank roll?"

"Here's his picture," Mrs. Sells said, taking a cabinet photograph from its wrappings in her hand bag. "He's a fine-looking man, don't you think?"

Miss McMullen glanced at the photograph, and handed it back.

"Well, far be it from me to knock anybody's fiancé," she said, "but between you and me, Mrs. Sells, I hope he's got that bank roll we were talking about."

The platform at Blysburg Junction was inhabited solely by an apathetic station agent and a couple of overgrown

Morris for the four-sixty," she explained to Mrs. Sells, when that flustered female was signing the telegram. "But I think it might be better to warn him of what's coming off, instead of fluttering down on him and yelping for money the first thing. They do say married men don't like that, and it might sort of faze your farmer friend to have it pulled on him before the noose is hitched."

"Oh, there won't be any trouble about the money," Mrs. Sells assured her. "Mr. Morris wrote me that he was well fixed."

"He is, but he doesn't know it," Birdie countered, "and now he's framing it up to crab everything. How did you make up your mind you wanted to marry him—from his picture or the size of



youths, who seemed to have grown to the baggage truck, when Miss McMullen and her hapless charge descended from the train. Neither of them bore any resemblance to the pictured face of Henry Morris, nestling in the hand bag of the agitated Mrs. Sells, and that worthy widow looked around blankly.

"I—I don't see him," she whispered, as the station agent ambled up to the express car, and the two natives eyed the newcomers with lazy curiosity.

"I don't think I ever could see him," Miss McMullen announced, "but I probably haven't got more than about seven seconds to stand around here. This rattler will be on its way, and it's me for Haven Lake."

"And leave me here all alone?" wailed Mrs. Sells. "Oh, don't leave me!"

"Well, say, I haven't adopted you exactly, you know," Birdie declared. "What do you want me to do—butt in on this honeymoon you've got framed up? What I'm worrying about is how I will get my four-sixty. Friend Henry seems to be a trifle late."

The conductor came out of the station with a slip of yellow paper, and trotted up toward the engine with the orders. The moment of decision was at hand.

"But—but suppose he doesn't come?" the widow whimpered. "Oh, I'm frightened to death!"

Birdie looked at the disconsolate figure a moment, and heaved a little sigh of resignation.

"All right—I'll stick and see you through," she said. "I might as well make a day of it."

And she hurried back into the coach to get her baggage, while the conductor waited impatiently, watch in hand and Mrs. Sells' imploring grasp upon his arm.

When the train had rolled away in a trail of smoke, and they stood alone on the platform, which even the over-

weary youths of the village had deserted as soon as the train was gone, Miss McMullen led her despondent charge to the battered old bench near the station door.

"Well, now that we're partners in this game," she said, "I might as well know all about it, and I've got to get a slant at your cards first. What about this Morris person—what do you know about him?"

Mrs. Sells began dabbing her eyes with an overworked handkerchief immediately.

"Why, not very much, I'm afraid," she said. "We've been corresponding for more than a month, and he said he was a widower and owned a big farm up here, and he wanted a wife because he was so lonely. And I thought everything was all right, of course, but I should have taken warning when he asked me for the money."

"Money?" Birdie shrieked. "What money?"

"I had eight hundred dollars in the bank down at Waverley, where I live," she explained, "and Mr. Morris wrote me that I'd better send it on day before yesterday, because he had a chance to buy some cattle cheap at an auction sale, and he was using all his cash—"

"Good night," Birdie interrupted blandly. "We won't be bothered by Henry. He has hidden himself in the densest shades of the jungle by this time, and he's talking to that little bank roll as if it were a human being."

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Sells quavered. "Don't you think he'll—he'll meet me?"

"Not unless we can wire somebody to hobble him," Miss McMullen declared. "And I don't see a very grand chance for that. Let's come in and ask the station agent a few things."

The apathetic station agent roused himself from his lethargy when the name of Henry Morris was mentioned, together with a request for definite in-

formation as to who he was, where he lived, and where he might be found.

"Why, yes, Morris lives here at the Junction," he said, "but shucks, he ain't no farmer! Why, he drives team for Jim Hawley that keeps the mill here—when he works at all. But Hank ain't no great hand for work."

"And ye won't find him here to-day," he went on, "'cause I seen him goin' south on the seven-forty-four this morning. 'Tain't often Hank takes a train, and he was all dressed up, so I s'pose he was startin' on some sizable trip."

"He didn't let you in on the big secret about where he was tearing for, did he?" Birdie inquired.

The station agent paused and began a painful search of his memory.

"Well, of course, I sold him his ticket," he said, "and it was to Chicago. So I s'pose that's where he's goin'. He's got a brother down there—feller named Sam. Got a saloon in Chicago."

Mrs. Sells had given herself over entirely to her grief in a corner of the station by that time, and was weeping copiously. The agent watched her curiously a few moments, and then leaned closer to Miss McMullen.

"Relation of Hank's?" he asked, jerking his head toward the widow.

"A near relation," she said. "She's all broken up because she missed him."

"I got a telegram for him a little while ago," the agent volunteered. "Some Mrs. Sells told him she was comin'. Is this the party?"

"Same party," Birdie admitted. "And you'd better keep a fire under your ticker, because you're likely to have some more telegrams before night."

She led Mrs. Sells out of the little station and up the plank walk toward the little town.

"The best thing we can do is to feed up a little first," she suggested, "and then see if we can get a line on friend

Morris from the town marshal or whatever sort of constable they've got here. If he hangs around Chicago more than three hours, we've got a fair chance of landing him. That weak-kneed shack across the street is labeled for a hotel," she went on, "and, thank Heaven, I've got my vacation money in my purse. We can eat, anyhow."

Mrs. Sells, picking her way along behind her resolute young associate, was moved to a fresh burst of tears by this view of the situation.

"It's a perfect shame—the way I'm imposing on you," she sobbed, "but I don't know what else to do. My sister in Harrisville has some money, but I'd have to write to her—"

"Forget it," Miss McMullen advised, leading the way into the hotel, "and think up some way of corraling that eight hundred your correspondence-school husband seems to have ducked with. That's the big idea now."

"Oh, no, it's gone," Mrs. Sells whimpered, "and I'll have to move to my sister's, and her husband and me don't get along."

After luncheon they held a conference with Town Marshal Berry which did not tend to raise the spirits of the dejected bride-to-be. He indorsed the opinion the station agent had given of Henry Morris, late of those parts; and when the true state of affairs had been disclosed to him, he was strong for official action, the only drawback to his immediate activities being that he did not know what to do.

"We ought to get that feller," he asserted. "By jiminetty, I'd like to do it myself! But when he's gone—why, he's gone, eh? And that's all there is to it."

"Now, don't get all heated up over it," Birdie advised him. "You're too earnest about your work, marshal. You just go down and see that no crooks get off that afternoon train, and I'll try to play this Morris hand myself. He



*"Now, don't get all heated up over it," Birdie advised him. "You're too earnest about your work, marshal."*

must have been a smooth party to get away from you like this, marshal."

"He certainly was," Berry admitted. "And from what you say, it was all planned out in advance, too. Looks mighty criminal."

Back to the railroad station the trail led, and there Miss McMullen sent a telegram to Sergeant Mooney, at detective headquarters in the city:

Look out for Henry Morris, yap from here. Skipped to-day with eight hundred, deserting woman who sent him the money on agreement to marry. I'll telephone you in town to-night. BIRDIE McMULLEN.

Mrs. Sells approved the message through her tears, but after it was on the wire, she woke up to the purport of the last sentence.

"But you won't be in the city to-night," she pointed out. "You're going up to Haven Lake, aren't you?"

"No, I've side-stepped that," Birdie said. "I don't think this is the right week for my vacation, anyhow. Now that I've butted into this game of yours, I'm going through with it, and it looks as if it would put a nick in my roll that would send me back to mother on the jump. I'm not going to leave you sitting here on this bench waiting for Hank to come back. I'll just stake you to your fare back home to Waverley, and you can tab it up with the four-sixty. If your sister ever loosens, or if Henry should mail you a check, I'll be there with my hand out. If nobody comes across to help you out, I guess I can stand it, but in the meantime it's me back to the big town for supplies."

They had a three-hour wait before the train for the city hesitated at Blysburg Junction, and Mrs. Sells beguiled the tedious time by giving Birdie a history of her life, a character reading of the late Mr. Sells, and a detailed account of the amatory correspondence that had passed between her and the flitting countryman, H. Morris.

"He wrote such lovely letters!" she

said, with a sigh. "And he said he was so lonesome!"

"Probably that's why he beat it for the city," Miss McMullen suggested; "only he should have waited until your train got in."

At the station, the agent beckoned to Birdie with a yellow envelope.

"Got a telegram for you," he said.

She ripped it open, and read it aloud to Mrs. Sells:

We have Henry Morris here at the central. Picked up while a con man was trying to sell him the Masonic Temple. Bank roll is safe. Says the woman was a day late for the wedding, and he was going to Waverley to look for her. MOONEY.

Mrs. Sells listened with widening eyes and a smile that slowly spread, as she grasped the meaning of the message. She clasped her hands in delight.

"My Henry!" she exclaimed. "He was going to meet me!"

Birdie looked at her mournfully.

"Oh, he was, eh?" she said. "Well, wasn't that nice of Henry? And so thoughtful of him not to telegraph! It might scare you to get a message."

"And he hasn't lost the money!" the radiant widow continued, oblivious to the interruption. "Isn't that grand? Oh, I wish the train would hurry!"

"Say, you don't mean to tell me you're going to tie up with this absent-minded party after all this, do you?" Birdie demanded.

"Certainly!" Mrs. Sells chirped. "It was all a little mistake. I'm sure he can explain everything. And I'll repay what you have loaned me the moment I meet Mr. Morris," she added, with new dignity.

Far off down the tracks they heard the whistle of the approaching train for the city. Birdie turned helplessly to the red brick station.

"Can you beat it?" she murmured. "And yet some gink is always asking me why I don't get married!"

# Troubles of the Scalp and Hair

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

HERETOFORE physicians have given comparatively little attention to common, everyday disorders of the hair and scalp. One reason is that they were rarely consulted for minor disturbances of this kind, and another is that the care of the body is receiving more thought and notice than it has since the days of ancient Rome. To-day there is a wholesome desire among all classes and conditions of people to present the best possible appearance, and the hair is a great factor in the attainment of this end.

The majority of scalp and hair troubles are due to neglect, to carelessness in the treatment given this part of the body. It is absolutely essential that the scalp be kept scrupulously clean, to insure it against the various disorders peculiar to it, and to preserve the hair in good condition. This means that the scalp must be washed at frequent intervals, and that it must be freed from dust, loose hairs, and scales *every* day; it is the accumulation of these things that produce dandruff, and dandruff is the chief cause of falling hair and baldness.

Attention to the hair and scalp will, in many instances, overcome conditions of this kind; even healthy scalps are prone to a little dandruff, which, in its uninfected state, is a natural product of the skin, for dandruff appears in other

parts of the body than on the head; it is only that it accumulates there, and, with dust, hair oil, and what not, in time develops into an extremely unpleasant disorder.

Dandruff interferes with the growth of hair by clinging to the skin about the roots and literally strangling them. No air, no nourishment reaches the parts, and they are stifled; they cannot breathe; they are not fed. Naturally, the hair is weakened; it becomes brittle, breaks off, falls out, and in time the roots die. Death of the roots is irremediable and incurable; baldness results.

Now, why, in some cases of long-standing baldness, is there a revival of hair growth, and why are women seldom or never bald? For the same reason in both cases: Women possess a heavier scalp lining than men; there is a cushion of fat between the cranial bones and the muscle that is commonly called the scalp, and this fatty layer preserves the hair. In some men there are many hair follicles deeply imbedded in this layer that have not been destroyed by the conditions that caused baldness, and persistent treatment of one kind or another kindles into life these follicles lying scattered and dormant here and there in the fatty tissue. After a while quite a perceptible—and in a few instances a pronouncedly favorable—

growth of hair can be coaxed into existence.

The hair and scalp should be systematically brushed every night before retiring. To reach the scalp, separate the hair into sections and brush all dust and flakes vigorously from the skin and about the hair roots; this stimulates the oil glands, removes the day's debris, and prevents the formation of dandruff. When dry flakes cling tenaciously to the head, it may become necessary to use a fine-tooth comb. Care must be taken not to irritate the scalp, and a bland oil should be rubbed into the parts if this occurs. It is sometimes better to soften adhering dandruff with oil to facilitate its removal, as most skin specialists condemn the fine-tooth comb entirely.

Women should never retire with their hair "done up." It should be well shaken and thoroughly ventilated, then separated at the side, and brushed strand after strand around the head. Brushes should contain white bristles, so that they will show the dirt; and as no one eager to cultivate beautiful hair will use soiled brushes, it goes without saying that they will be washed frequently. The unpleasant odor so often detected upon the heads of women who are otherwise faultlessly clean, is due to perspiration and oiliness. If the hair is tossed about, brushed and ventilated, and allowed to hang in loose braids during sleep, this condition cannot arise.



Cleanse the scalp with a soft nailbrush and soap jelly.

Those who perspire freely or have very oily hair, as well as those who spend much time in the kitchen, or are otherwise strenuously employed, require very frequent shampooing, and between times it is a capital thing to use a dry shampoo, which absorbs odors and moisture. Great care must be taken to brush every particle of the powder out of the hair, otherwise it clogs up the pores and does more

harm than good.

A dry shampoo may be had by scenting a pound of cornmeal with an ounce of powdered orris root and sprinkling this through the hair.

The character of the shampoo employed is of very little concern to most people; as a matter of fact, it is very important. As good a shampoo as any for general use is soap jelly, directions for making which will be sent on application.

The hair should be first moistened with warm water

softened slightly with toilet ammonia. The scalp should then be thoroughly gone over with soap jelly and a small hand brush, not too vigorously, as this is apt to make the skin tender. The hair should then be washed and the entire head rinsed repeatedly in warm water, and lastly in chilled water, to close the pores. Dry the hair in the open air, if the weather permits. Sun drying is excellent, especially for light hair; artificial heat should never be employed, as it is too drying.

Many specialists advise an egg sham-



poo, claiming that the iron and sulphur contained in eggs have a tonic action; the albumen, being mildly alkaline, mingles with the oil from the glands and forms a soapy lather. It is best to use the eggs alone, breaking one or more upon the hair, and with the fleshy parts of the finger tips rubbing the mass slowly and forcibly into the scalp and hair roots. To the very last rinsing water a teaspoonful of lemon juice should be added to cut the egg and remove it completely from the hair.

Where stimulation of the scalp is required, nothing is better than green soap, or, better still, tincture of green soap. It is used in precisely the same way as soap jelly. An oily scalp requires a drying shampoo, of which the following is a good example:

Potassium carbonate .....	1 ounce
Ammonia water .....	1½ ounces
Tincture of cantharides .....	6 drams
Bay rum .....	4 ounces
Alcohol .....	4 ounces
Water .....	6 ounces

Dissolve the potassium carbonate in the water and add the remaining ingredients. The quantity is sufficient for several shampoos. Rub the lotion thoroughly into the scalp and hair, taking considerable time, rinse in several waters, and dry carefully as directed heretofore. A dry scalp requires an oily shampoo, and oil or liquid vaseline should be rubbed well into the scalp before and after the shampoo.

Tar and tar soaps are excellent for dark hair, but should under no circumstances be used upon light or white hair, as tar has a tendency to darken the hair. Certain drugs, notably resorcin and jaborandi, have the same effect; therefore tonics containing these drugs can be employed successfully only on dark hair that is changing color, and that can sometimes be restored by the use of these drugs.

Dandruff is undoubtedly the most common of all scalp troubles, and it is



The correct way to brush the hair.

by no means as simple as it appears. There are cases of persistent dandruff that no amount of treatment seems to help. Indeed, the condition may exist throughout life and cause only a very gradual and scarcely perceptible thinning of the hair. This thinning is, however, uninterrupted, and as old age comes on, the head is covered with a thin growth of gray or white hair, through which the scalp is plainly seen, covered with dry flakes. The nature of dandruff varies; some is unquestionably microbic, and this form is more amenable to treatment than other varieties. Local measures are, of course, most important, but diet, exercise, and general hygiene should also be carefully looked after.

Most specialists agree that sulphur heads the list of remedies in the treatment of dandruff of microbic origin. A cream is given here that is highly extolled by the foremost authority in New York:

Sulphur precipitate .....	1 dram
Lanolin .....	2½ ounces
Glycerin .....	2½ ounces
Rose water .....	2½ ounces

Another sulphur cream, by the same authority, contains:

Precipitated sulphur .....	6 drams
Borax .....	25 grains
White wax .....	6 drams
Paraffin oil .....	4½ ounces
Rose water .....	2 ounces

In severe cases, these creams should be applied to the scalp every night, then every second night, then once or twice a week.

A course of treatment for persistent dandruff, with accompanying loss of hair, that has proven its worth in numberless cases, is the following: Wash the head thoroughly with terebene, or any other mildly antiseptic soap, rinse well, and dry with warm towels. Then rub in a lotion composed of:

Mercuric chloride .....	24 grains
Glycerin .....	4 ounces
Cologne water .....	4 ounces
Water to make .....	16 ounces

Dry the hair again with a towel, and apply this solution:

Beta naphthol .....	100 grains
Alcohol .....	16 ounces

Allow this to evaporate, and finally rub in a small quantity of an application consisting of:

Salicylic acid .....	100 grains
Compound tincture of benzoin ..	2½ drams
Olive oil to make .....	16 ounces

This treatment should be carried out daily for one month, then on alternate days for another month. It is complicated and somewhat expensive, but one-half of the various preparations can be made up and the bottles labeled: one, two, three; thus facilitating their use. Under this treatment dandruff is said to disappear in short order, and the hair takes on a new and vigorous growth. It is assuredly well worth a trial. A simpler preparation contains:

Resorcin .....	6 drams
Salicylic acid .....	20 grains
Bay rum .....	16 ounces

Salicylic acid prevents resorcin from altering the color of the hair. This should be well rubbed into the scalp every day, or every other day. If the

scalp is very dry and the hair dull and lifeless, an ounce of olive oil can be added to this preparation with decided advantage.

Falling hair, dry, brittle hair, and other changes indicative of unhealthy conditions, usually precede baldness. While these disorders are frequently caused by disturbances of the scalp, they may be dependent upon other things: anæmia, for instance, headaches, lowered nutrition, mental and nervous strain, bad hygienic surroundings, and proprietary shampoos that contain an excess of free alkali and dry out the scalp and hair.

Free circulation of blood throughout the scalp is of paramount importance, both to maintain its health and to restore it. No form of local treatment is so efficacious as massage; vibratory massage, or the electric vibrator, gives good results in many instances. Electricity must be used in moderation upon the scalp, however, as it has a tendency to coarsen the hair. There is nothing that so stimulates the scalp, or that promotes the healthful secretion of the glands so effectually, as hand massage; it is to the scalp what physical culture is to the body.

In women, a pronounced fall of hair is usually observed in the autumn; it is well to take this in time. The following French formula, which contains many stimulating ingredients, will be found highly satisfactory:

Jaborandi leaves .....	½ ounce
Tincture of cinchona .....	3 ounces
Tincture of arnica .....	3 ounces

Macerate the leaves in the tincture for eight days, then filter and add two and a half drams of tincture of cantharides. Apply this to the scalp with a dropper, separating the hair well and running the tonic along the seams. Rub it into the scalp with careful massage movements for ten minutes at bedtime.

The tendency to baldness should be combated before the condition exists;

Continued on second page following.



Valeska Suratt

# Making the Hair Grow, and Other Beauty Secrets

**Individualism and Simplicity in Methods of Beauty-Making, Are Strongly Exemplified in the Following Article, by the Foremost Living, Self-Made Beauty of the American Stage, Miss Valeska Suratt. In Characteristic Vein, She Explains the Methods Which Have Produced for Her the Loveliness Which Has Brought Her Fame.**

*By Miss Valeska Suratt.*

**M**AKING the hair grow was for a long time as great a problem to me, as it is today to thousands of women. There were days when thick hair would come out on comb or brush, and I feared baldness would soon result. After long experimenting, I came to two inevitable conclusions—the hair must have nourishment to keep it in good condition, and the hair roots must be allowed to breathe. Dirt and scurf accumulate on the scalp and no soap can remove it. Dandruff results, the hair becomes starved, looks lifeless and begins to fall out. I came to the conclusion then that the hair needs two things, a shampoo that is not a soap, but a remover of scurf, dandruff and dirt, and a tonic that will strengthen the roots, stop the hair falling and force the hair to grow.

For the shampoo I have found that a teaspoonful of eggol dissolved in a cup of hot water makes the cheapest and best cleanser. It will remove every particle of dirt and scurf, and leave the hair soft and fluffy and easy to do up. I usually shampoo at least twice a month. Twenty-five cents' worth of eggol is enough for a dozen delightful shampoos.

Now for my hair-growing formula: Mix half a pint of alcohol with half a pint of water and add one ounce of beta-quinol (if you prefer use a pint of bay rum instead of the alcohol and water), apply this freely to the scalp, after brushing it generously for a few minutes; rub thoroughly with the finger tips. The beta-quinol will cost you about fifty cents at the drug store and this will make a full pint of the best hair tonic it is possible to make.

As for wrinkles, I used to look upon them much as the drying of an apple skin foretells inevitably the passing of youth that can never again return. Since I have worked out for myself the problem of ridding myself of these check-marks of Nature's bookkeeper, I have changed my mind. Like a splash of a pebble in a pond, the face of the water is ruffled, many ripples widen toward the shore and disappear and the water reflects the sun and the blue sky again as before, it was just a splash, nothing more. My dear readers, there is little excuse now for the presence of wrinkles. The results of this formula have indeed proved this to be the case. Every woman should try this formula, use it freely, and then your face will reflect again the sunshine of youth, and every wrinkle will be just a vanishing ripple, nothing more. In a large bowl pour half a pint of hot water; place bowl in a pan of hot water on a slow fire; add slowly two ounces of eptol and stir constantly until it begins to cream; remove from fire and add a tablespoonful of glycerine, stirring until cold. This will give you a large quantity of fine, white, satiny cream. This will not grow hair. Enough eptol to make the

above formula will cost you about fifty cents at any first class drug or department store.

The complexion may be quickly beautified. A lady once said to me, "I'm sick and tired of trying to beautify my face and arms. I have used about everything this side of the pearly gates and I still haven't a complexion to be proud of." This is the sentiment felt by thousands of women everywhere, and the question is asked, "Is there anything which will actually and in a short time produce the rose-like complexions we see in beautifully colored photographs?" Upon one of my trips through the South, I met a lady who had the most beautiful, peach bloom, velvety complexion I ever saw and she gave me a formula for a cream. I made up some and used it liberally, the results were remarkable. Here it is: Bring a pint of water to the boiling point; add, slowly, one ounce of zintone; stir constantly until all is dissolved; then add two tablespoonfuls of glycerine. Fifty cents' worth of zintone will make a pint of this excellent beauty cream.

For superfluous hair there is nothing which will remove it so perfectly, so magically as simple sulfo solution. It simply dissolves the hair instead of burning it off like pastes and powders, and never irritates, reddens or injures the skin. It can be used on the tenderest skin and no matter how stiff or soft the hair growth. Many women have "down" on their faces and arms. Removed with this simple solution, the difference in appearance will be startling. Druggists charge one dollar an ounce for sulfo solution, and it is certainly worth it.

Blackheads, big and little, should be removed without pinching and squeezing, as this reddens and spots the skin. Get some powdered norexin from your druggist. Fifty cents' worth will be all you will need. Sprinkle a little on a hot, wet sponge and rub briskly for a minute or two over the blackheads. You'll be surprised how they will disappear in a few moments.

The face-powder and perfume are the finishing touches to every woman's toilet. I have tried so many kinds of powder with such poor satisfaction that I finally worked out a formula of my own and it is now sold in most department and drug stores as the Valeska Suratt Face Powder, at 50 cents for an extra large box in flesh or white. The Valeska Suratt Perfume is sold in cut glass stoppered bottles only (never in bulk), at \$1.00 per bottle.

Every article mentioned in my formulas can be found in most first-class drug stores. If you are not convenient to one, or if your druggist should not have the article you want, my secretary will mail you the article, postpaid, if you enclose the price to me. Simply address your letter, Valeska Suratt, 371 Thompson Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Kindly mark your letter, "For Secretary."

## TROUBLES OF THE SCALP AND HAIR

here an ounce of prevention is assuredly worth a pound of cure. *Complete baldness seldom if ever responds to treatment, for the reasons given before.* Authorities upon this subject state that *premature baldness*, in eighty per cent of all cases, is due to carelessness. Men should avoid stiff hats as much as possible, and those worn should invariably be *blocked to fit the head*. Too much emphasis cannot be put on this advice. Thousands of hats are made over the same block, whereas no two heads are shaped exactly alike; compression, therefore, by stiff hats cuts off the blood supply; certain parts of the scalp receive little if any nourishment; and destruction of the hair follicles, with gradual baldness, results.

Excessive shampooing, with carelessness in drying the hair, is also conducive to baldness. It is suggested that men cleanse their scalps less with water and more with brushes and oils. Dandruff is, of course, the greatest factor in the production of baldness, and when this condition is being vigorously treated, the tendency toward the gradual decay of the hair can usually be checked.

The first thing in the treatment of baldness is stimulation of the hair follicles, to renew their activity and encourage their growth. How is this brought about? In various ways: with forcible massage by skillful fingers; with electrical treatments; with stimulating salves and ointments; and with a new treatment that can be given only by skin specialists, and is called phototherapy. It is the most powerful remedy we possess, and holds out a hope even for complete baldness.

However, stimulation of the scalp with salves and ointments, in conjunc-

tion with mechanical treatment, is frequently highly successful. Crysarobin is regarded by some authorities as the best drug for this purpose. Great care must be taken not to get it in the eyes; a cap of stout linen or oiled silk should be worn after it is applied:

Crysarobin .....	30 parts
Resin .....	5 parts
Yellow wax .....	35 parts
Olive oil .....	30 parts

This ointment should be rubbed into the scalp every day until it can no longer be borne; it should be resumed after the soreness has disappeared, and used in this way for some weeks. If a slight, downy growth appears, it is an encouragement to continue.

Sabourand, the famous French skin specialist, advises that the following stimulating lotion be rubbed into the scalp daily:

Pilocarpine hydrochlorate .....	6 grains
Spirit of lavender .....	10 drams
Ether .....	10 drams
Ammonia water .....	1 dram
Alcohol to make .....	16 ounces

A harmless method for restoring gray hair will be forwarded upon application.

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### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

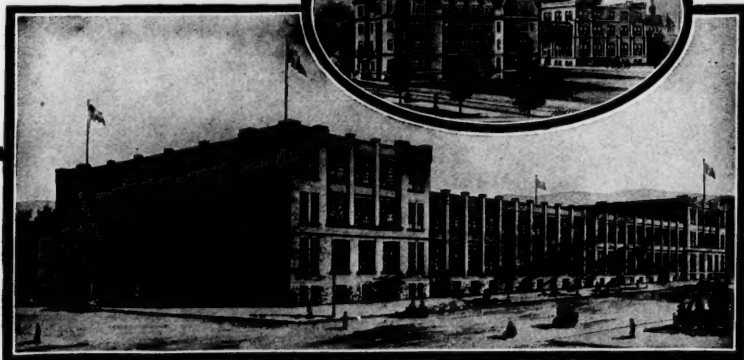
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Corrosive sublimate .....	2 grains
Powdered borax .....	½ dram
Lemon juice .....	1 ounce
Rose water .....	4 ounces

Mop with absorbent cotton; when the skin peels off, apply cold cream.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

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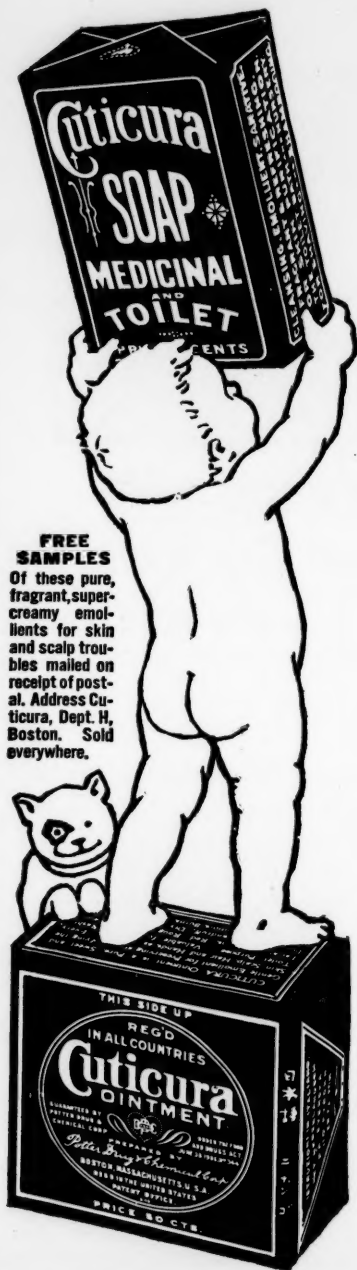
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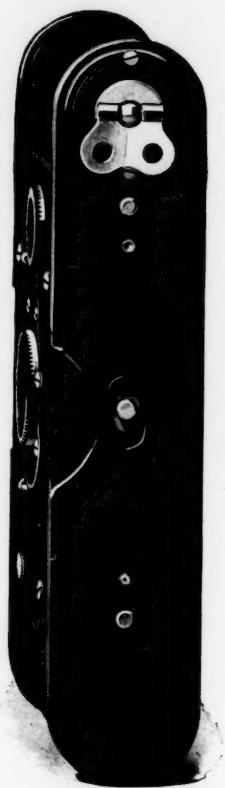
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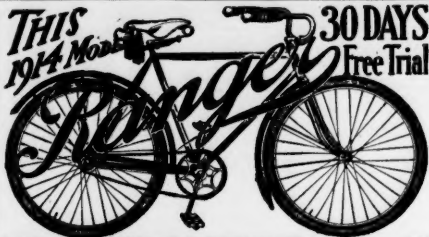
## Blue White Genuine DIAMONDS

At Low Prices—Easy Terms

to buy a rug or chair or table for that future home. We are importers and sell Diamonds direct, saving you jobber's and retailer's profits. **Certified Guarantee with every Diamond** guaranteeing weight and quality. We will send any

Diamond or Watch in our Magnificent 25th Anniversary Art Catalog for your examination without obligation or advance payment. We also send free magnifying glass. Diamond investments pay 15% profits yearly in increased value. Note the remarkable values in two of our leaders shown herewith at \$60 and \$100. All transactions strictly confidential. Send for Catalog and Special Low Price Beating offer of One Carat Diamond for only \$125. Write today—now.

**The Walker Edmund Co.,** Diamond State & Madison Sts., Importers, Dept. J, Chicago, Ill.



**EXTRAORDINARY OFFER—30 days** (one month's) free trial on this finest of bicycles—the "Ranger." We will ship it to you on approval, freight prepaid, without a cent deposit in advance. This offer is genuine. **WRITE TODAY** for our big catalog showing our full line of bicycles for men and women, boys and girls at prices never before equaled for like quality. It is a cyclopedia of bicycles, sundries and useful bicycle information. It's free. **TIRES, COASTER-BRAKE** rear wheels, inner tubes, lamps, cyclometers, equipment and parts for all bicycles at **special prices.** A limited number of second hand bicycles taken in trade by our retail stores will be closed out at once, at \$3 to \$6 each. **WIDE AGENTS** wanted in each town and district to ride and exhibit a sample 1914 model Ranger furnished by us. **it Costs You Nothing** to learn what we offer you and how we can do it. You will be astonished and convinced. **Do not buy a bicycle, tires or sundries until you get our catalog and new low prices and marvelous offers. Write today.** **MEAD-CYCLE CO., Dept. F 110 CHICAGO, ILL.**

**BARODA** Flash Like Genuine **DIAMONDS** at 1/50 the cost—IN SOLID GOLD RINGS WHEN YOU BUY A BARODA

Do not think of it as an imitation diamond; think of it as it is—A Genuine *Mined Gem* with a hardness, lustre and environment that classes it with a genuine diamond. It answers every quality you require—brillancy, lasting qualities, hardness and perfect cut—so let us send you one of these bargains C. O. D. returnable in 3 days, if unsatisfactory. Ladies' Tiffany style 14 K Solid Gold ring, 1 carat stone, \$5.98. Men's ring, \$6.98, stud or pin, \$4.98. Our catalogue shows full line. Enclose 10c for ring measure.

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Send me your name and address right NOW and I will send you **Investing for Profit** magazine absolutely free for six months. It tells how to get the utmost earnings from your money—how to tell good investments—how to pick the most profitable of sound investments. It reveals how bankers and capitalists make \$1,000 grow to \$25,000—in fact gives you the vital investing information that should enable you to make your money grow proportionately. I have decided this month to give 500 six month subscriptions to **Investing for Profit** FREE! Every copy is

## Worth at Least \$10

to every investor—perhaps a fortune. Send your name and address now, mention this paper and get a **Free** introductory subscription. Conditions may prevent repeating this offer. Better take it now. You'll be willing to pay 10c a copy after you have read it six months.

**H. L. BARBER, Pub., R418 30 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago**

## Don't Wear A Truss

**FREE TRIAL** Stuart's PLAPAO-PADS are different from the truss, being medicine applicators made **Self-Adhesive** to prevent slipping, and the resultant chafing and shifting of the pad out of place and against the bone; they have, therefore, proven to be an important adjunct in retaining rupture that cannot be held by a truss.

**No Straps, Buckles or Springs** attached. **Soft as velvet**—easy to apply—**inexpensive.** Awarded Gold Medal, Rome; Grand Prix, Paris. Old and young and attested under oath that the **Plapao-Pads** cured their rupture—some of them most aggravated cases. No delay from work. Process of recovery is natural, so more apt to be permanent. We "show you" by sending Trial of Plapao absolutely **FREE.** Write for it today. **PLAPAO CORPORATION, Block 1379 St. Louis, Mo.**

# Milo

The EGYPTIAN CIGARETTE of QUALITY



If you prefer Plain Ends ask for the  
Milo Flat Red Box

Cork Tips in the Milo  
Yellow Label Box

## White Frost Refrigerators

**Sold direct from factory to you. Freight prepaid. 30 days free trial in your home. Easy monthly payments if desired.**

The "White Frost" was adopted by the U. S. Government, after rigid tests, for use in Panama, where perfect refrigeration, sanitation and ice economy are so vital. The "White Frost" is beautiful as well as sanitary. Perfect refrigeration. Made entirely of metal. Enamelled snowy-white, inside and out. Revolving Shelves. Trimmings solid brass, nicked. Anti-friction, roller bearing casters. 9 years on the market. Lasts a lifetime. (25 year guaranty.) Saves its price in cost of ice—very economical.

**"Please, Bob, buy me a White Frost Refrigerator."**

That's what thousands of women have said, after seeing the "White Frost". Buy one and pay for it on easy terms, while using it in your home. Prices low and payment so easy you will never miss the money. Remember—30 days free trial and all freight paid. **Send postal for free catalog.**

**Metal Stamping Co.**  
Dept. 665  
Jackson, Mich.



## Perfect Your Figure



as nature intended it. Enjoy good health as every woman can.

You should be **VIGOROUS, HEALTHY and ATTRACTIVE**, for then only are you normal. These are your birthright.

If you are not in the best of health or are dissatisfied with your appearance, I can surely help you.

### MY GUARANTEE:

With my free book, "The Body Beautiful," which is fully illustrated with photographs of myself explaining my system, I give full particulars of my Guaranteed Trial Plan whereby you can test the value of my instruction without risking a single penny.

Send two-cent stamp for "The Body Beautiful" and Trial Plan today.

**Annette Kellermann**  
Suite 110 S, 12 W. 31st Street, New York

## Romances of Modern Business

**T**HE American romance is in the large office-buildings and the marts of trade; it is the romance of great achievements in commerce, in industrial leadership. And it is a wonderful romance! The child of the world's nations is leading them!—ARNOLD BENNETT.

### CHAPTER II

#### How Time Was Sent Ticking Around the World

THIS story tells how the world was helped to measure its time. It is an interesting story, well worth a volume. It is about the Ingersoll dollar watch.

We first see two farmer boys from Michigan, with a small loft in Fulton Street, in New York City, selling rubber type and other small things of their own invention.

Then we turn a few pages and view these same rustic lads transformed into the executives of a business with its arms reaching to all corners of the earth.

Robert H. Ingersoll and his brother, Charles, by peddling their specialties, had worked up a small trade in New York. One day the elder boy noticed a small clock hanging on the wall of an office he visited. The young man saw a vision in that clock.

Its works were machine-made and, therefore, inexpensive. He believed they could be made small enough to fit into a watch-case. He knew that a watch so made could be sold at a small price and would meet a universal need.

Young Ingersoll requested the maker of the clock to reduce the size of the works. The suggestion was ridiculed. But the farmer boy did not mind being laughed at and worked on the model himself. The result was that the first Ingersoll watch was offered for sale in 1893.

Ingersoll believed that his fortune had been made when he completed the watch. He knew that there were hundreds of thousands of citizens walking up and down in the United

States at that very moment who would be glad to pay a dollar for such a watch.

But how was he to reach these people, how acquaint the public with his product? The co-operation of dealers could not be enlisted; they preferred to sell higher-priced watches. So months passed in the little loft in Fulton Street.

The psychology of advertising had impressed itself on Robert Ingersoll when he had read a small weekly magazine that reached the Michigan farm. He decided to insert a small advertisement—the smallest that would be accepted—in a magazine.

Enters now a magazine advertising manager. He had seen the small announcement and perceived the commercial possibilities of a dollar watch. He found two young Western men in a small loft with a big commodity and not knowing what to do with it.

Then the Ingersoll brothers listened to what seemed like a fairy story to them. They should take a quarter-page of space in the magazine and great success would be theirs.

This they considered a too uncertain financial risk. They were reluctant. The advertising man was persistent and eloquent. Ingersoll's courage fattened on the other's vision. The contract for the quarter-page advertisement was given.

"It was like staking an entire fortune on the turn of a wheel," said Robert H. Ingersoll, in telling of this crucial episode in the history of his business. "I can never forget that time. From the day the contract was made and the copy O.K.'d, until the magazine came

## How Time Was Sent Ticking Around the World

out, three weeks later, we waited with bated breath.

"The first day's mail after that magazine had reached its readers brought us fifteen hundred dollars' worth of orders. From then on business increased as we broadened our magazine advertising campaign. The world's time used to be measured by a bell, a sun dial, or a steam whistle, but now Ingersoll watches have ticked their way around the world and the world measures its time by them."

It is only a little more than twenty years since the Ingersoll watch was placed upon the market. Today it is used throughout the world. Thirty-five million watches have been sold. Fifteen thousand are manufactured and shipped daily.

After Colonel Roosevelt returned from his African trip, he told Mr. Ingersoll that in some places of the Dark Continent he found his fame resting on having come from the same land where the Ingersoll watch was made.

Robert Ingersoll, now the president of a great industry, often has wondered what he and his brother would have done if the magazine advertising manager had not walked into their office and directed their course.

Today the course would be perfectly obvious. A young firm with something that everyone wanted would find some way to buy space in the magazines and tell the public about it.

But this was in a day before high-power magazine publicity had attained its present efficiency.

The advertising manager showed them how to tell the entire world of their watch, how to reach the thirty-five million men and women who today are using Ingersoll watches. From a loft in a New York building the news of this dollar watch being made spread throughout the world. A direct avenue of success was opened through the pages of the national magazines.

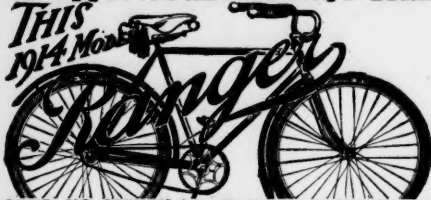
Great as the Ingersoll watch is, and great as was the latent demand for it, its history could not have become one of the most stirring romances of modern business life if it had not been written, chapter by chapter, month by month, in the advertising pages of the American national magazines.

And the public service promoted in the development of an industry such as Robert H. Ingersoll & Bro. must not be overlooked. Thirty-five million men, women, and children of many nations of the world have been enabled to measure their working and playing hours by a correct timepiece. They have become more correct and businesslike; their lives have been made more orderly and systematic.

Mr. Ingersoll started out to give the world a dollar watch, and, despite the increased price of labor and materials, still is turning out a dollar watch. And the world has been made the better for it.



**Delivered TO YOU FREE**  
on Approval and 30 Days Trial



**SEND NO MONEY** but write today for our big 1914 catalog of "Ranger" Bicycles, Tires and Sundries at prices so low they will astonish you. Also particulars of our great new offer to deliver you a **Ranger Bicycle on one month's free trial** without a cent expense to you. It's absolutely genuine. **BOYS** you can make money taking orders for bicycles, tires, lamps, sundries, etc. from our big handsome catalog. It's free. It contains "combination offers" for re-fitting your old bicycle like new at very low cost. Also much useful bicycle information. Send for it. **LOW FACTORY PRICES** direct to you. No one else can offer such values and such terms. You cannot afford to buy a bicycle, tires or sundries without first learning what we can offer you. Write now.

**Mead Cycle Co., Dept. F110 Chicago, Ill.**

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**MULLINS 16 foot special steel launch** affords the pleasures of motor boating, and provides a safe, seaworthy, dependable motor boat, with graceful lines and beautiful finish—**Absolutely Guaranteed Against Puncture**—Safe as a life boat, with air chambers concealed beneath decks in bow and stern—Can't warp, split, dry out or rot—No seams to calk—No cracks to leak.

**MULLINS 130 Special Launch** is equipped with 2-Cycle, 3-H. P. Ferro engine, that can't stall—Speed 8-12 to 9 miles an hour—One man control—Fitted with MULLINS silent under-water exhaust.

This 16 footer seats 8 people comfortably—has 4 foot beam and 11 foot 4 inch cockpit—Positively the greatest launch value ever offered. Write today for beautifully illustrated motor boat catalog, containing full particulars.

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325 Franklin St. Salem, Ohio, U. S. A.  
**THE WORLD'S LARGEST BOAT BUILDERS**

**MULLINS STEEL BOATS CAN'T SINK**



25 years on the market. Sold by all druggists wherever heads ache. Twelve wafers for 25 cents—or send 10 cents for trial sample—three doses.

**The Zymole Co., 108 John St., New York**

**ASK YOUR MIRROR:**

AM I LOOKING AS YOUNG AS I SHOULD?  
A WOMAN IS AS OLD AS SHE LOOKS.



To look fresh and fair and to feel plump and fine is a woman's privilege. If she only knows how to do it. There is no mystery about Dr. James F. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Complexion Wafers for beautifying the complexion and developing the form.

The most beautiful women of two continents owe their fresh complexions, sparkling eyes and physical vigor to the use of these wafers. Same have been on the market since 1886—for thirty years—and are absolutely safe and harmless. Guaranteed under the Pure Food and Drug Act.

Speedily and magically transform the coarsest and most unattractive skin into a clear, velvety, beautiful complexion. 50 cents and \$1.00 per box by mail in plain cover, on receipt of price, from Richard Fink Co., Dept. 54, 415 Broadway, New York. Every druggist can get Dr. Campbell's Arsenic Wafers for you from his wholesale dealer.



**AGENTS**

Wonderful opportunity. Act quick. **SELL "AMBERW" CONCENTRATED BEER EXTRACT FOR MAKING BEER AT HOME.** Just by the addition of water. Not a Near Beer, not a substitute, but a pure, genuine, foaming Lager Beer for one cent a glass. Small, compact, carry the Beer in concentrated form in your pocket and supply the enormous demand. **GUARANTEED STRICTLY LEGITIMATE, CAN BE SOLD ANYWHERE. Wet or Dry, NO LICENSE REQUIRED.** Something new, everyone buys, a sure reseller. Immense demand—no competition—100 per cent profit. Territory open fast, no experience needed. All or spare time. Just send postal ticket. We'll show you how to make money quick.  
**THE AMBERW COMPANY, Dept. 1408, Cincinnati, O.**

**YOUR NEWSDEALER**

maintains his store at considerable expense. He must pay for help, rent and lighting. He carries many articles that you would never dream of ordering direct from manufacturers, and is, therefore, of great service when you need a newspaper, a cigar or a box of stationery. Then why not give him all of your custom and so help make his business profitable?

Tell him to show you samples of **AINSLEE'S, POPULAR, SMITH'S, PEOPLE'S, NEW STORY and TOP-NOTCH** magazines. Select those you want and he will gladly deliver them to your residence regularly.

Then, when you want something good to read, you will not have to search for it.

**STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York**

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



# CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

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**LADIES** make shields at home. \$10 per 100. Work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co., Dept. 48, Kalamazoo, Mich.

**SILK Hose Free** to Agents selling famous Triplewear guaranteed hosiery. Great money making proposition. \$30. week. Write to-day. Triplewear Mills, Dept. S15, 13th and Sansom, Phila., Pa.

**WILL Pay Reliable Man or Woman** \$12.50 to distribute 100 Free pkgs. Perfumed Borax Soap Powder among friends. No money required. R. Ward Company, 224 Institute Pl., Chicago.

**I MADE \$50,000 in five years** with a small mail order business; began with \$5. Send for free booklet. Tells how. Heacock, Box 718, Lockport, New York.

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**MEN OF IDEAS** and Inventive ability should write for new "Lists of Needed Inventions." Patent Buyers and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Advice Free. Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 46, Washington, D. C.

**HONEST MAN WANTED** in each town to distribute free advertising premiums; \$15 a week to start; experience unnecessary; references required. Address McLean Black & Co., 8 S. Beverly St., Boston, Mass.

**75% COMMISSIONS.** Prizes, etc., open for not more than 2 salespeople. No experience. We train you. Work in your own town. Write quick Tolax Chemical Company, Utica, N. Y.

**OPPORTUNITY** to make \$5-\$10 daily selling dressy servicable raincoats at less than inferior ready made kind. Empire Tailored Raincoat Co., 2831 Third Ave., New York City.

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**POETS AND SONG WRITERS**—We will compose music to your verses, publish, advertise, copyright in your name and pay you 50 per cent of profits if successful. We pay hundreds of dollars a year to amateur writers. Send us your poems or melodies today. Acceptance guaranteed if available. Examination and advice Free. Dugdale Co., 256 Dugdale Building, Washington, D. C.

## Agents and Help Wanted—Continued

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**FREE FOR SIX MONTHS.**—My Special offer to introduce my magazine "Investing for Profit." It is worth \$10 a copy to anyone who has been getting poorer while the rich, richer. It demonstrates the real earning power of money, and shows how anyone, no matter how poor, can acquire riches. Investing for Profit is the only progressive financial journal published. It shows how \$100 grows to \$2,500. Write Now and I'll send it six months free. H. L. Barber, 408, 20 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

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**I guarantee \$10 for first Photo Play** you write by my method. Obtain free booklet "How To Write Photo Plays." Elbert Moore, Box 772 HS, Chicago.

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**INDIAN photograph post cards.** Something different. War-dances. Chiefs intimate views of Indian life. 5c each, set of 12 for 50c. all different. The Osage Post Card Co., Fairfax, Okla.

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**SONG POEMS WANTED:** I've paid writers thousands in royalties. Send me samples of your work for free criticism, or write for valuable Free Booklet and most liberal, legitimate proposition offered. Absolute protection. Est. 16 years. Numerous successes. John T. Hall, Pres., 10 Columbus Circle, New York.

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His Gift, That She Will Always Cherish



Our handsome 128-page illustrated Catalog may truly be called the "Book of Bargains." All the new, popular styles in jewelry are shown—gorgeously beautiful Diamonds, artistic solid gold and platinum mountings—exquisite things—that sell in some cash stores at double our prices. Our watches, too, are big bargains. Select anything desired and

**Let Us Send It to You on Approval**

If satisfactory, send us one-fifth of purchase price as first payment, balance divided into eight equal amounts, payable monthly. We pay all delivery charges. Send for Catalog today—NOW. Don't delay.

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Diamonds increase in value 10 to 20 per cent each year. A diamond is the ideal gift for the loved one. We give better values and easier terms than any house in America.

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18-30-38 and 37 ft. boats at proportionate prices. All launches tested and fitted with Detroit two-cycle reversible engines with speed controlling lever—simplest engine made—starts without cranking—has only 3 moving parts—anyone can run it. The Safe Launch—absolutely non-sinkable—needs no boshouse. All boats fitted with air-tight compartments—cannot sink, leak or rust. We are sole owners of the patents for the manufacture of rolled steel, lock-seamed steel boats. Orders filled the day they are received. Boats shipped to every part of the world. Free Catalog. Steel Rowboats, \$20.

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Pittsburgh, Pa., 4246 Fifth Ave.  
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Here at last is the very camera the world has waited for—just the camera you have always wanted. No experience needed to make pictures with our sure-shot picture-taker. This new, amazing invention enables any man, woman—yes, even children—to make finished post card photos in one minute. Think of it! Finished pictures made in a minute's time—taken and finished right on the spot.

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A new one minute camera. Gives all the joys of picture-taking without the usual labor and expense. Does away with films and plates—bills, tanks and trouble. No inconveniences. No fuss or muss. The "Mandel-ette" cuts down the cost of making finished pictures to one-tenth of what it costs with the ordinary camera. No developer worries. No usual expensive camera accessories. The greatest camera invention of our age. Your vacation is not complete unless you have a "Mandel-ette." Use it for all occasions. You simply can't afford to be without it. Read this

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We are the inventors and manufacturers of the "Mandel-ette," patterned after the famous "Mandel" Camera. We sell it direct to you at rock bottom price. We want everybody to own a "Mandel-ette" so we make you this special money back offer. Order your outfit right from this ad; make pictures with it by following our simple instructions, and if you find that the "Mandel-ette" will not do everything that we claim for it, send it back and your money will be refunded. Isn't this a fair offer?

## \$5.00 Complete Outfit

(Add 50c for Parcel Post)

This outfit includes the "Mandel-ette" Camera and everything that is needed to make 16 finished post card photos. You begin making finished pictures as soon as outfit arrives. No waiting. If you want a tripod, send \$1 additional. Extra post cards, 25c per package of 16. Send postal or express money order, draft or personal check. Don't wait, order your outfit right from this ad. Do it now.

Write for this book. Learn all about this new and wonderful process of taking and finishing pictures in one minute. Realize what a big advantage the "Mandel-ette" gives you over the ordinary camera. Consider the time and money you can save. You can make money too by selling these one minute pictures. Each finished picture costs you 1 1/2 c, sells for 10c. Big profits and great fun await you. Order the "Mandel-ette" whether you want it for pleasure or profit, or send for the book today.

## THE CHICAGO FERROTYPE COMPANY

1163 Ferrottype Bldg., Chicago, Ill., or Dept. A163 Public Bk. Bldg., 89-91 Delancey St. New York, N.Y.

This wonderful camera makes pictures direct on post cards without films, plates, printing or dark room. Camera weighs about 24 ounces and measures about 4 x 4 x 5 1/2 inches; size of pictures, 2 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches. Loads in daylight with 16 or 50 cards at one time—no dark room necessary. Universal focus lens produces sharp pictures at all distances. Perfect working shutter. Combined "3-in-1" Developer eliminates any other solution. Pictures develop automatically in less than a minute—can't over-develop. Plain instructions with each outfit enable you to begin making pictures the very hour outfit arrives. SEND FOR THE OUTFIT TODAY.



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That's what Mr. Eakins made—paid his last \$10 for rent of a store window—at the end of 30 days had \$1500 in the bank—today he is independent. A Crispette machine and Crispettes did it.

Mr. Perrin, Cal., took in \$380 in one day—every nickel brought him almost 4c profit. What are you going to do in the future? Just barely earn a living—keep wishing for something to turn up? Don't do it.

LISTEN—take that money you have saved up against the day of opportunity—invest it in a Long Popcorn Crispette Machine, and make fortune smile on you—build up a big paying business. Think of the fortunes made of 5c pieces—street cars—moving picture shows—5 and 10c stores. Everyone will spend a nickel—everyone likes Crispettes—children—par-

### **ALMOST 400% PROFIT**

Every 20c invested returns \$1.00 cash—not theory—not guess work—not imagination, but the actual bona fide proven record of profits from Crispette machines from Coney Island to Ore.—from Canada to Argentine Republic.

STOP! You have followed the rut too long—received only what others cared to give. Get on the other side—take only what you want. F. C. Thompson, Ore., took in \$575 in 27 days. E. H. H., Pa., sold over 12,000 rolls in two weeks—just records from letters from Crispette merchants in all parts of the country.

I want to start you in the same business that made me wealthy.

W. Z. LONG.



ents—old folks. You don't need any experience—you can start anywhere—in a store window, a small store room where rent is cheap, or the kitchen of your home. The Crispette machine and Long's secret formula to the man of limited means is a Gold Mine—a sure way to independence and fortune—to make money from the start.

The money barons began with much less advantage than I offer you today. Write NOW for my handsomely illustrated 48 page free booklet, "How to Make Money in the Crispette Business," or

### **Come To See Me At My Expense**

It's unnecessary to write that you are coming—just drop in any time. I will pay your traveling expenses within a 300 mile radius if you buy a machine. I will give you reference after reference from responsible merchants, bankers, citizens—satisfy yourself and then go over the Crispette business with me.

### **Go Into This Business NOW—**

The big spring and summer trade is waiting for you right in your own city. Send for my free booklet "Dollars & Sense In The Crispette Business." It tells the whole story—how and where to start—how to succeed, proved by the experience of others. It's worth reading even if you don't start. If you are looking for a good thing and easy money, send for this book—TODAY.

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Please send me free, full particulars about Crispette Machine and how to start a big paying business.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_



# America's Telephones Lead the World Service Best—Cost Lowest

from *London "Daily Mail"*

Why is it that Government ownership and management of the telephones is practically always a failure?

Why is it that throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain and the Continent hardly a single efficient long-distance service is to be found? Why is it that in New York one can wait for a

from *"Electrical Industries" (London)*

THERE is a certain amount of satisfaction in the fact that Mr. Winston Churchill got so angry over the freaks of the telephone the other day that he flung his receiver on the floor. As a member of the Government which purchased the telephone system, he deserves all the torture that Post Office working can inflict. But his rage, doubtless, is a

From *"Le Petit Phare de Nantes," Paris*

"But today I found I had to talk with Saint-Malo, and, wishing to be put through quickly, I had my name inscribed on the waiting list first thing in the morning; the operator told me—though very amiably, I must confess—that I would have to wait thirteen hours and ten minutes (you are reading it right) in order to be put through."

Herr Wendel, in *The German Diet*.

"I refer here to Freiberg. There the entire telephone service is interrupted at 9 o'clock p. m. Five minutes after 9 o'clock it is impossible to obtain a telephone connection."

Herr Haberland, Deputy, in the *Reichstag*

"The average time required to get a connection with Berlin is now 1½ hours. Our business life and trade suffer considerably on account of this lack of telephone facilities, which exists not only between Düsseldorf and Berlin and between Berlin and the West, but also between other towns, such as Strassburg, Antwerp, etc."

Dr. R. Luther, in the *Dresdner Anzeiger*

"In the year 1913, 36 years after the discovery of the electro-magnetic telephone, in the age of the beginning of wireless telegraphy, one of the largest cities of Germany, Dresden, with half a million inhabitants, is without adequate telephone facilities."

UNITED STATES

SWITZERLAND  
NETHERLANDS  
NORWAY  
SWEDEN  
RUSSIA  
DENMARK  
GREAT BRITAIN  
GERMAN EMPIRE  
FRANCE  
ITALY  
HUNGARY  
AUSTRIA  
BULGARIA  
BELGIUM  
SPAIN  
PORTUGAL

## Real Average Cost of Telephone Service per year to a subscriber in the United States and European countries (based on official reports).

Note: In translating European costs into American dollars, consideration has been given to the relative purchasing power of money in Europe and the United States as shown by operators' wages.

\$10 \$20 \$30 \$40 \$50 \$60 \$70 \$80 \$90 \$100 \$110 \$120 \$130 \$140 \$150 \$160 \$170

**These are the reasons why there are twelve times as many telephones for each hundred persons in the United States as in Europe.**



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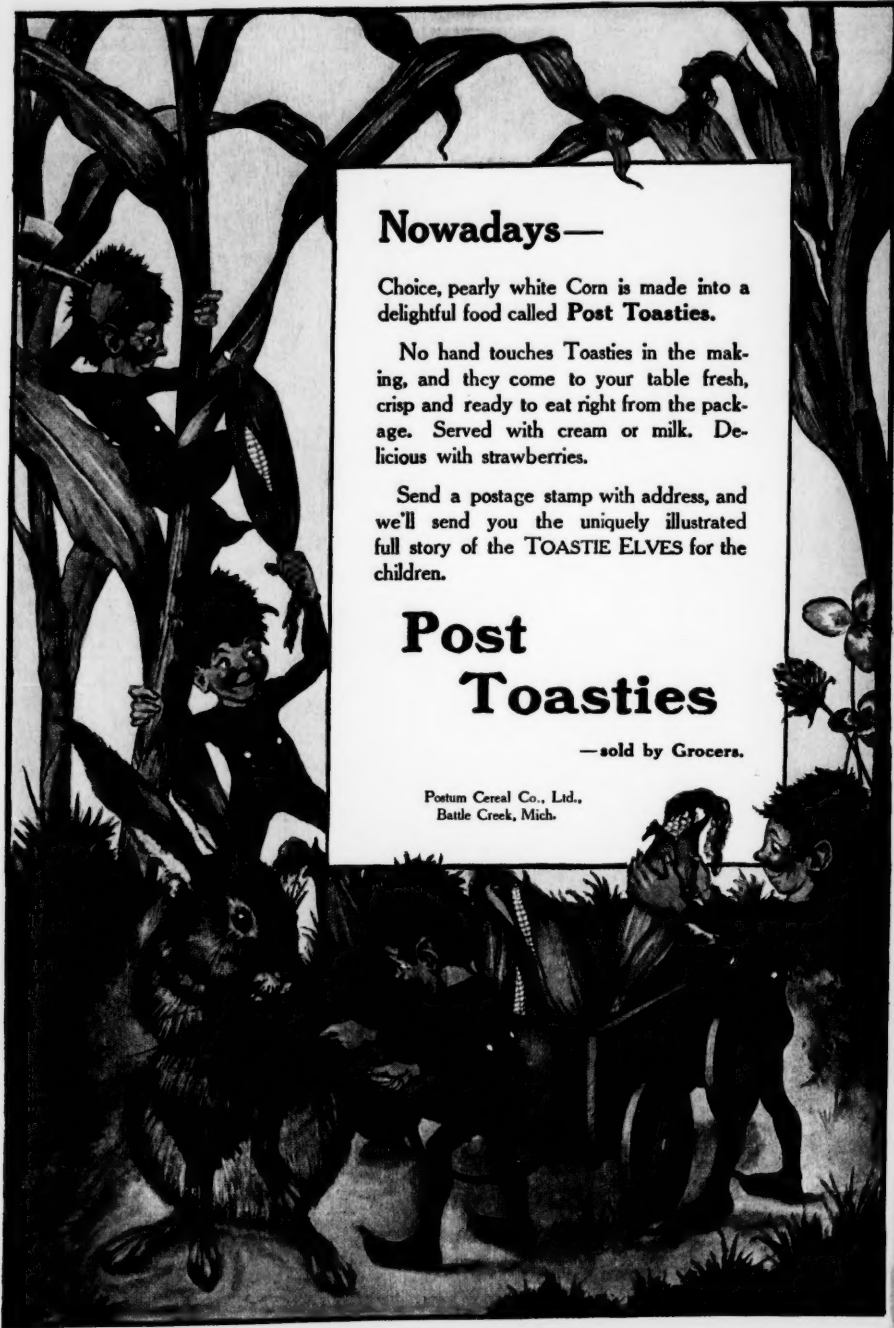
4 Shaves a week @ 15c	-	.60	52 weeks @ 1.00 per week	\$52.00
4 Tips " " @ 10c	-	.40	Gem outfit complete	- 1.00
<b>Total per week</b>	-	<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>Saving</b>	- <b>\$51.00</b>

GEM DAMASKEENE RAZOR outfit  
complete with 7 Gem Damaskeene Blades, in  
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